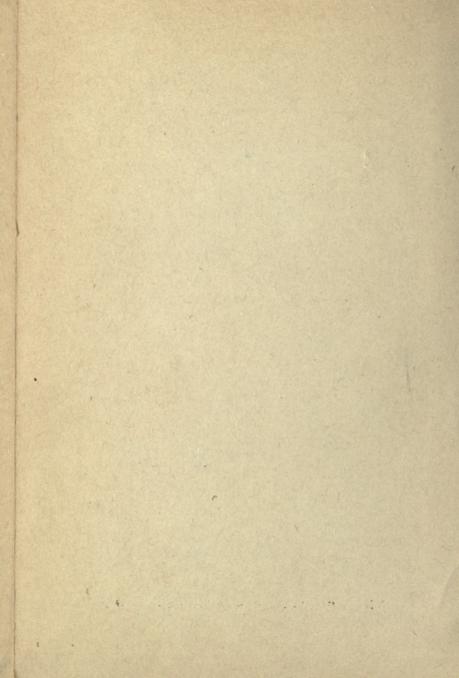


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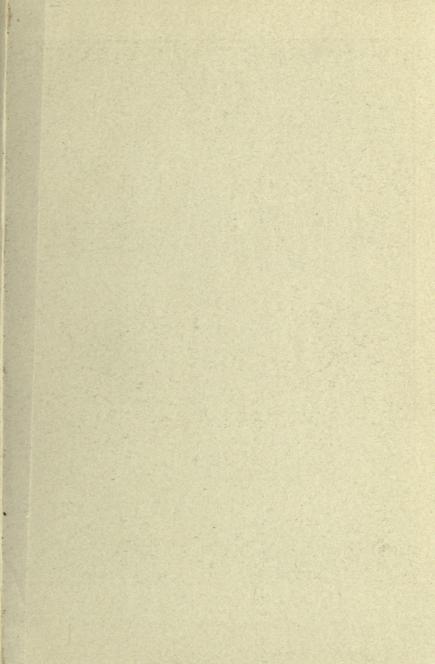
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"Your Fury of divorce, that robbed me of my happiness, commenced in our little Parisian apartment, where I pictured the triumph of our future as I vocalized and ironed your shirts." (Page 250.)

Miss American Dollars

A ROMANCE OF TRAVEL

BY

PAUL MYRON, P Seud, Author of "OUR CHINESE CHANCES", Etc.

Paul Myron Wentworth Lineburger

With Original Pictures

BY

FRANÇOIS OLIVIER

and other Illustrations



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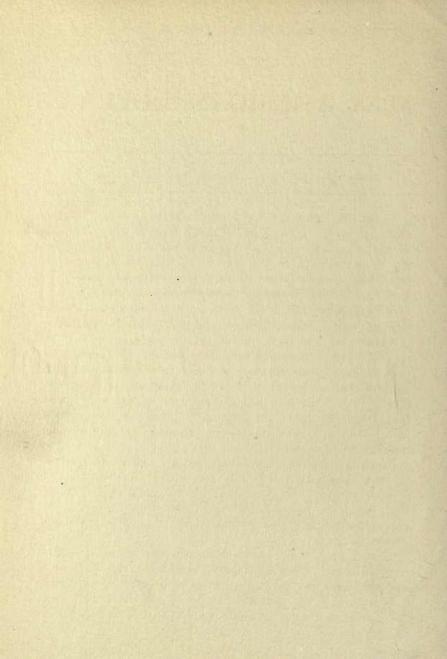
PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Mid-Nation Publishers take the liberty to suggest that the romance of "Miss American Dollars," is not founded upon an imaginary kingdom, but indeed upon current history, pivoting from the actual creation of Albania by the Sextuple Group before plunging into the Great War.

All the details of the varied descriptive matter are actual although the moving characters are, of course, creatures of the author's imagination: but the references to events and personages of history are real.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING PAGE	
"Your American Fury of divorce, robbed me of my happiness, commenced in our little Parisian apartment, where I pictured the triumph of our future as I vocalized and ironed your shirts."	
"Her face in his fancy shone down upon him from the sapphire sky above Salamis—in a beauty to him fairer than that which inspired Phidias." 68	
"Beyond the roadside cemetery a huddled, white gowned figure was going into the gateway, suggestive of a spirit passing into the other land."	
"Then the whole world grew red and black before her and the earth sank and rose in the thunder of the battle. She wondered why they still bothered with those tiny sabers and rifles when the big guns were bringing the very heavens down upon them."	
"Oh! The grief of that peasant mother. It is such as she who alone repair the ravages of war. With her face still swollen with weeping she turns from her soldier's grave to the cradle of his child, knowing that the diaper of today will change to war's death shroud tomorrow." 188	
"It's confirmation of the news of the death of his last son— there were four of them all killed in battle—and now he has only that daughter left. See how she tries to avoid hearing the news and how he heritates to tell her"	



MISS AMERICAN DOLLARS

IN WHICH MAGNUS FIRST APPEARS

"Yes! We must find an American heiress—a real Yankee millionairess.... Think of what we have to offer her! A throne!... Just reflect on the part that Albania will some day have to play in the control of the Adriatic and in the whole game of war or in the concerts of peace.... Look!..." and Magnus, dark and heavy, sinister but commanding, tapped his hand upon the map outspread on the mahogany desk before him, snapping with his forefinger at the coast line just above the island of Corfu.

"What are a few trashy millions in mere gold compared with the power and influence over *lives* which will eventually go with that throne when it has the right sort of King and Queen?... Considering that American fathers and American daughters have paid cargoes of money for mere empty titles, how much then would you estimate the value of this real throne of power?"

From the fireside, the cheerful flames licked out against the raw damp air which both men soldier-like tolerated as it came up from the waters of the Grand Canal. Count Coste buttoned his coat and then poised his cigarette, his eyes following its gilded escutcheon to avoid the questioning gaze of Magnus.

"I say, what would not such an office be worth in American millions?" repeated Magnus, as he took from his pocket and put to his lips what appeared to be a cigarette, but really only a very clever imitation made of unglazed porcelain and filled with some strongly mentholated drug, at which he took a whiff.

"Perhaps a great deal—, perhaps nothing," at length drawlingly answered the Count. "But what has all this got to do with me?"

"Perhaps a great deal—, perhaps nothing," mockingly responded Magnus, as he strode forward and sitting down directly opposite Coste, leaned over and drawled out deliberately.

"Say! How much are your gambling debts at the Club?" Coste jumped up, his cheeks aflame with anger and his fists clenched.

"Sit down, my boy," exclaimed Magnus, placing his hands on the shoulders of the Count. "Please sit down and hear me through, for I am your best friend, if you only knew it, and I mean no offense. Hear me through and then strike me afterward if you wish—, and I—I, a man old enough to be your father—will not resent it. . . You owe exactly one hundred and twelve thousand lire, do you not?"

Coste gave a start of surprise and then limply sank back into the chair. The figure was correct.

"Now, my dear Count," continued Magnus, satisfied at the effect his words had had, "you certainly could not believe that I would interest myself in you to the extent of finding out about your gambling debts if I did not intend to befriend you. Please calm yourself. May we not be fortified by having a little liqueur?"

Coste remained silent with tightened lips as Magnus pushed the button. Immediately a footman appeared.

"I believe that your preference is fine champagne," he intimated to Coste.

"I suppose that you found that out also from the Club gossips," sneeringly assented the Count.

Magnus, giving his order to the servant, pretended not to notice the remark.

They were decorously served from a concealed sideboard panelled in at the end of the wonderful Venetian banquet hall which seemed a part of this Magnus, the mysterious, who, in his elaborate suite of extravagant rooms, by the reigning force of his personality, called back in fancy the generations of courtly conspirators who had flitted out much of the intrigue of their lives within just such Venetian Palace walls. Perhaps some thought of that tragic past came to Magnus as he sat watching the Count—of that fiery past whose passion still lived on alone in him, as far as one could judge him by his present conduct, in an avarice for power,—power for gold when to the world all the nobler impulses of his heart were dead. He daintily raised the clear glass of opal liqueur.

"Here's to your—to our—success in, in—everything," he ventured, and his reassuring smile mirrored something of smoothness in the ruffled look of concession upon the Count's handsome features as he lightly lifted the glass and then drained it in a gulp.

Silence again prevailed until the footman, at a sign from Magnus had left.

"Are the old rules of the Club in regard to the payment of gambling debts still in force?" drawled Magnus heavily but with a soothing, rising inflection to his perfect Italian.

The Count's face grew grey. Helplessly he sank back into the chair. The flame of his anger seemed to reflect itself from the embers burning in the grate before him.

"Pardon!" conciliated Magnus, "I mean no offense. I merely wanted to say that if you are distressed I think that I can find a way to relieve you."

Coste did what many smoking men do when they are excitedly perplexed: puffed away until the nervous twitching of his face settled into a mold, sphynx-like under the mantle of smoke which, with each puff, screened his features and then floated upward, snatching away some fancied part of doubt and uncertainty. As he smoked, he lightly fingered his cigarette case while the thought flashed out Marconi-like from the fire of his cigarette to the reflective center of his still disturbed brain.

Evidently Magnus was hard after him for something—perhaps good, perhaps bad—he couldn't decide yet. Everybody in the Club was apprehensive of Magnus—that was the nickname some one had given him because he seemed so

heavy, so mysterious and came with such vague yet tremendous credentials, that he was accepted just as he was, precise and powerful,-no one ever thought of inquiring who he really was, or where he might be eventually going; Magnus the Austrian who spoke German like a Berliner, Italian like a Florentine and all the other usual languages like a practiced polyglot and whose every measured word came like a deciding voice from a Tribunal of last resort. He knew everything and everybody, although he had few friends and communicants. When he appeared anywhere he was always alone and came and went like an expansive, shadowing ghost. It was known that at one time he had occupied a very high Austrian Cabinet office,—that then he had been appointed ambassador abroad and that thereafter well—he had apparently retired. This was all that the Count could really remember about him. . . . Why should Magnus have asked him to call? Why this solicitude concerning his debts? Could it be that he intended to tender him the throne after he had found a match for him with some American millionairess? . . .

Coste could hardly account for what the massive Magnus was leading up to. But he realized that he was not in a position to quarrel with any one who was in the least disposed to help him out of his gambling disgrace.

"And in case you would save me from my troubles at the Club—what would you expect in return?"

"Expect you to do exactly what I-we, would ask of you-"

The Count raised his handsome head inquiringly. Magnus, with a wave of the hand, continued.

"More than this I cannot tell you now, but if you will do as you will be told, your gambling debts will be paid and fortune will smile on you most beamingly."

The Count reflected. He was not conceited. He had been too gently and nobly bred to ever look in the mirror for love of what he saw there or to exaggerate his personal qualities even in those strange confidences which all human beings have within their own mind concerning their own self-es-

timated value. But he did know that he had royal blood in his veins; that he had come from one of the oldest houses of all Europe and that so far as he himself was concerned, he had done nothing to tarnish the proud name he bore, except, alas, for the skeleton which he now saw framing itself out from every deal of the cards; dry, rattling bones already grimly assembled, but which had as yet not stalked before the world. What was it that Magnus wanted him to do? Why was it that he was willing to rehabilitate his position in the gambling circle of the Club by paying his indebtedness? Surely, without any vanity on his part, he, Count Coste, was eligible to the throne by reason of the nobility of his forebears. Yes. That must be it-, Magnus, without wishing to commit himself, wanted him to be King of Albania, and in order to crown him, was seeking to marry him to an American millionairess, . . . Of course Magnus had some ulterior purpose—that of his own aggrandisement in one of the many ways that political intrigue on such a large scale offered, but what could it matter to Coste as long as in this most attractive fashion he could be pulled out free from the meshes of his gambling creditors?

As he thus reflected, he felt his heart suddenly grow light within him. At length his dark eyes shone with gratitude toward Magnus and there was a buoyant levity in his words when he ventured.

"Well, I hardly like this Dr. Faust and Mephisto fashion of pledging myself. Come, please tell me more about it."

"That I cannot," declared Magnus firmly. "It is for you to promise absolutely or else let the matter drop exactly where it is. What I ask of you is that you do just as I say, that you help me as I shall suggest. In return, I will help you, commencing first of all by paying up your gambling debts and providing you with such funds as may be needed as we go along on our enterprise. More than this I can tell you nothing." He took a whiff from his porcelain cigarette and then nonchalantly—almost indifferently, asked:

[&]quot;Do you promise?"

"Does a drowning man promise to requite him who saves him?" returned the Count.

"Bene," said Magnus. "We will then conclude that our contract for mutual service is entered into, will we not?"

"Yes! And now what do you want me to do?" eagerly asked Coste.

"I will tell you when the proper time comes," responded Magnus, rather coldly. "That will be all for to-day. No, wait a moment, we must drink a toast before we part, a toast to the King and Queen of Albania."

They waited in silence while the footman brought the champagne, and their voices sounded hardly louder than the gilded ceiling echo of the chink of their glasses when the two stood up and faced each other as they toasted.

"And now we will finish the bottle just to her alone, and may she quickly appear, our Queen American Dollars."

As the wine fizzed dry in the Count's throat, he tried to visualize in his imagination a girl to fit the strange title, and in response to the puzzled query of his face, the iron set features of Magnus relaxed as he said:

"Do not doubt. She will appear sooner, perhaps, than you think and she will also be beautiful. . . . this Queen American Dollars."

COUNT COSTE COUNTS THE COST

The Count himself spoke all the principal European languages well, and was such a perfect linguist that his mind phrased its meditations into whatever language a certain person or thing nationalized itself. Hence, as he stepped down into the gondola waiting for him at the end of the marble-faced balconied palace, at a curious side entrance half concealed by the flowered running vines of the garden walls, his thought inwardly expressed itself in the language of Queen American Dollars, and the phrase screened itself out

in his mind as if he were reading it as a headline in a newspaper:

"COUNT COSTE COUNTS THE COST"

The alliteration and the double sense of the words hardly occurred to him as he continued his reflections. would be a great cost to him—, this selling of his liberty—, this entering into a bargain where even his very honor might in some way be irretrievably lost. What a fool he had been to gamble! He was not at all a lenient judge ordinarily of his own conduct, and as the swish of the gondola's oar came to his ears, its soft sound became a lash striking upon his conscience. . . . How could it ever have been brought about that he, Count Coste, who, at the age of twenty-five, was the oldest direct male descendant of one of the most ancient houses of Europe-, that he, . . . could have been a fool to the extent of compromising his reputation for the madness of gambling? He felt sure that it was because of some mental weakness resulting from the wound which he, as lieutenant in command of his company, had received in a murderous attack from the tribesmen of Enver in Tripoli, and for the slow healing of which he had been invalided home. Coste snapped a match to his ever ready cigarette and as the fire crept up on it, higher with each puff, finally cindering up over the gilded escutcheon which represented the pride of his great family, he reflected that even so might he be consumed by his inability to meet his gambling debts.

No. There was no other way out of it; he must do exactly as Magnus said; there was absolutely no other chance for him to ever get the money. His family had, since the death of his father some twenty years before, lost very large sums of money, and during the war their income had been cut down to a tithe of what it had formerly been. At the present time, one hundred and twelve thousand lire was to him a terrific sum. But if he allowed Magnus to advance him this money, would it really mean any more than a transfer of his ruinous obligation to perhaps a more dangerous indebtedness? Would it not mean that he would be jumping from

the frying pan down into the very fire, putting himself in the clutch of one man rather than several—, of one man a foreigner—an Austrian—and almost a stranger at that?

As he thus mused, the music came to him from the Piazza San Marco. It was a concert night and the military band, in spite of the sharp damp air of the evening, had attracted a crowd. He followed up between the stone columns, the Lion of St. Mark in the electric light casting grotesque shadows upon the marble pavement. Then he followed on beneath the mass of the Campanile, down through the arched lobbies to a dark corner of a cafe, where, unobserved, he could sit and think. The music awakened the half dormant impulses of his finer nature and he recoiled at the thought of the promise he had made to sell his very soul, as it were, to Magnus. But he was not yet lost; he could perhaps still redeem himself in some manner. He called for a cognac. It ran his mind like molten metal into a new mould. How would it be if he should again play at the Club? His luck could not always continue against him and perhaps by carefully doubling on his bets he might wipe out the entire amount that very single evening. He had known of such things being done before. He called for another cognac and after drinking it, found himself quite pleased with his purpose to try to mend his fortune independently of Magnus. He arose and impatiently rapped for the waiter, eager to pay and be gone. He would hurry to his own lodging to change, and then to his mother's palace, for she had especially urged him to come that evening. Afterwards he would go to the Club and play in one last desperate effort to retrieve his losses.

The Duchess was delighted at his coming, and as soon as he was announced, came out into the small reception room which served as an anti-salon to the great hall beyond.

"How good of you, my son! It has been so long since you dined with us. That detestable Club seems to take up all of your time. But you shall be rewarded for coming to-night by meeting a most charmingly beautiful girl who is here with her father. It is Miss Ward, the daughter of Colonel Ward. They have run over from Genoa just to visit Cornelia, who is to go with them and me on their private yacht for a cruise in Grecian waters. Now don't lose your heart to her,' and the Duchess let her eyes dwell fondly upon him for a moment before she continued in a low, sympathetic tone:

"Tell me, figlio mio, why do you look so downcast of late? Tell me, my darling boy. You know how I am thinking of

you always."

Coste put her aside gently and, patting her cheek, laughed away her solicitude as he led her into the presence of her guests. Before a picture—a Titian—her own face in profile so as to make it seem almost like one of the painted figures and a part of the picture itself, he saw the chiseled features of a wondrously beautiful young woman, her rounded arm lightly resting through that of a tall, grey haired man.

"Miss Ward, Colonel Ward, I present my son, Count Coste," introduced the Duchess, and then laughingly added, "He is a very bad son, for he sometimes lets a whole day go by without coming to see me, but, then, you know that he was wounded in a victorious charge against the Senussi—a charge which he himself led—so, you see, that, not being quite recovered, he really is excusable."

Athena Ward looked at the handsome military figure admiringly and even the old Colonel, with his half contempt for the scions of noble families, fixed his gaze kindly upon Coste.

There were only the five at the dinner and Cornelia and Athena were soon coming to terms of intimacy, which established a real feeling of deep friendship between the others before the dinner was half concluded.

Coste reluctantly arose to go to the Club. He had almost forgotten the terrible sword of Damocles which was hanging over his head. And then he thought of Magnus—, of how he was selling himself to escape disgrace. Ah, he was not fit to sit in the presence of such women as his mother, his sister and—, and—, this new angelic woman whom he had for the first time met and whose beauty was beyond any

type ever before conceived by him. Again he settled back into his chair, feeling like a convict begging still for some little respite before being led away to the gibbet. Laughingly he picked up a rose which had become disengaged from the modest little corsage bouquet that Miss Ward wore at her slim waist.

"May I have it?" he asked as he picked it up from the table. "It is just about the right size for a boutonniere. Oh, thank you," he continued, as she for answer drew it through the lapel of his coat. "How did you know that I never wore flowers unless they were pinned on me by a lady protectress?"

Athena smiled. He wondered at the composure of the wonderful American Beauty who, in a mysterious way, during the whole evening had made herself the center of conversation without really having taken any noticeable part in it. With the presumption of Italian youth, he looked into her eyes, but she curtained them with their long silken lashes and coolly turned her attention away from him. Ah Evidently nothing of a flirt in this wonderful woman—a composite of both Juno and Venus. He looked toward his mother and saw that she was eyeing him anxiously.

"Is it really necessary that you should leave us so soon?" she asked.

"Yes, mother," he responded abruptly.

He arose and kissing her hand, gracefully and gallantly bade them farewell. In a moment he was gone.

His heart was heavy as he went along toward the Club. He felt as if—yes, he *knew* that his own shortcoming and frailty had cut him away from his real world.

But that night,—that very night—, everything would be decided for him. He would play a last time—, he would double up if he lost and would play treble if he won. Yes, that was the system. If he won—, . . . then he would be free—free from the disgrace of the debt which, with its nightly accumulations had hung added millstones about his neck until now he was at the last straining point of his strength. But if he lost? . . . Well, he could not be worse

off than he actually was, and he could do as the German officers did when they were in irretrievable disgrace: a pistol and some quiet place and it would all be over. . . . With his life he could square himself with the world.

"But I will win! Yes, I will win," he thought to himself with rising hope as his mind again went back to the dinner table in the princely dining hall of his mother's proud home.

Coste soon had his place again at the table of silent players where the pantomime of losers and winners was uncanny in its mystery to all except themselves.

In an hour he had lost fifteen thousand lire, five thousand going on a single turn of the cards. His fellow gamblers looked at him in side glances inquiringly, then one to another, wondering at his mad, unreasoned play. Coste, excusing himself from the table for a moment, went down into the Club library, his head aswim with despair. At the first table in the dining room beyond he espied Magnus, as usual entirely alone. Drawn as if by magnetic influence, Coste went toward him, and at a hypnotic command, sat down opposite him.

"Well, I am glad that you have met her," remarked Magnus, as he poured out a sparing portion of wine from the grotesquely long necked decanter.

"Met whom?" queried Coste.

"Why the Queen—Queen American Dollars. Miss Athena Ward and the only child of Colonel Ward, with over fifty million lire in income a year."

"What! They who dined with my mother to-night?"

"Exactly. Thus you see that your duties are not so arduous after all. By the way," he continued, as he noticed Coste's look of bewilderment. "We will say nothing further in that regard for the present, for it is needless to discuss your American guests. It is now more important for you to know that I have taken up your I. O. U.'s." He dug into his pocket and Coste in his excitement did not notice that his hand came back empty. "They had already gone into the hands of usurers and there was an extortion

of interest which you probably overlooked, but which, of course, I gladly paid, in view of the circumstances of the debt." He leered out insinuatingly, and then continued with apparent candor. "But really, you must stop this gambling madness. If you must play, cut down your stakes and try to follow some sort of a percentage rule. The fifteen thousand lire you just lost was money thrown away."

Coste looked at him confusedly as he continued.

"Yes. Cut down your stakes. Raising your bets as you proceed is always a bad rule. Always follow your luck—don't try to lead it. When you play your style and system, you are simply making luck your master, and there is no master harder than luck."

Coste buried his chin in his hands and then on a sudden impulse, reached over for the decanter of Chianti wine and drank a goblet of it raw, something that he had never before in all his life done. After he had wiped his lips, he looked at Magnus helplessly—, almost as a dog to his master.

"Feel in your right hand coat pocket and there you will find twenty thousand lire to pay for what you have lost and to give you a new stake. But quit when you have lost that, for there is a limit to everything."

"But I cannot always lose," exclaimed Coste, as almost involuntarily he felt in his pocket and caught the crisp crinkle of the bank notes. The tone of gratitude came to his voice as he murmured his thanks.

"Ah. Indeed you can," returned Magnus. "Bad luck runs in streaks sometimes as long as a man's whole life," saying which he got up and walked away indifferently in his elegant, ponderous fashion.

Coste watched the commanding, self-possessed form as he left the room and noticed the especial deference with which the lackey opened the door to him—a deference which even he, of kingly lineage, had never been shown. He took out a cigarette and dazedly smoked in the same seat where Magnus had almost contemptuously thrust the bank bills into his pocket. He clenched them fiercely as he sat and blew the smoke, fighting off the frenzy of his desire to return to the gambling table.

His features at length masked themselves in the mold of a sudden resolution. He arose, went to the wardrobe, put on his hat and coat and had already left the Club, when suddenly, with a half muttered curse against himself, he turned about and with staring eyes and set face, like one marching to his doom, rushed back into the card rooms. . . . Without removing hat or top-coat, again he commenced to play.

It was one o'clock when he arose, wan and haggard. He feverishly took out a memorandum book and with a trembling hand, scrawled out the entry of the I. O. U.'s he had given for his losses which for that night alone, now totalled forty thousand lire.

There was no sleep for Coste that night. He cast the events of the day over in his mind and realized that he was bound heart and soul to Magnus. He asked himself again and again what could be the ultimate motive of Magnus in the whole intrigue. He felt well satisfied that it was his intention, for some ulterior purpose which he could not fathom, to marry him, Coste, to the beautiful American. He was inclined to look upon the Albanian throne pretext as a sort of a subterfuge for some surer game whose secrecy he, Magnus, did not dare reveal. Evidently and positively the fair American and her handsome father were to be made the victims of a conspiracy of which he himself had now become an irrevocable part. What could he do to release himself? . . . How could be ever discover the real purpose of Magnus? And with these questions calling through his tired brain, he worried through the night in an agony of despair.

III ''I SHALL BE KING''

"Back in 1843 a bushel of wheat was worth only twenty-five cents, but yet that twenty-five cents represented a hard day's wage," said Colonel Ward to his daughter Athena,

as he stood with a pigeon perched on either shoulder and others fluttering about in their endeavors to get at the grain which he held in his hand, while they loitered about in the Piazza San Marco, one of the first mornings after their arrival in Venice.

"Father, you have such a wonderful brain," remarked Athena. "Just the sight of this grain starts your mind back, with a perfectly accurate memory, nearly two generations ago. Do you realize how greatly I appreciate you as a traveling companion? Everything that we see or do over here seems to give you some suggestion of America."

"Thank you, daughter," warmly responded the Colonel. "Perhaps I am too much of an American." He put his hand back to stroke the back of a pigeon, which, flying away, brought him closer to Athena when he said in a lower tone of paternal confidence:

"Really, do you know, daughter, I would get greater enjoyment out of meeting these splendid men and women here in Venice if they did not all have some sort of title of nobility tacked on to them which always makes me see a group of ragged, wretched peons just in the perspective beyond them."

"Peons, father!" exclaimed Athena. "Why peons? They only belong to Mexico."

"Yes, peons, daughter. For they were the first sort of economic slave I ever saw and my mind always goes back to their misery and suffering, as I saw it as a drummer boy in the Mexican War with Zachary Taylor. Yes, when I see the gold lace liveries of European nobility in my imagination I also see the rags of the poor and I wonder how it is that even with all the wealth of our country we have gone as far as we have in our money grabbing without more of poverty to show among our masses."

A stranger would have wondered at the paradox of such sympathy from one who had done much for those who possessed nothing; but Athena only nodded her head approvingly, for she was well in sympathy with her father's almost socialist notions.

"And what I bemoan more than anything is that it seems futile to attempt any sort of philanthropy at home. Founding libraries, endowing institutions, creating foundations of scientific research, organizing for the suppression of the social evil, or against intemperance, all this is not a matter of private philanthropy but rather of actual governmental administration, and as long as private citizens attempt to do such work just so long will the public administration shirk its duty. The extortionate taxes already exacted are amply sufficient to take care of all necessary details, if the money was properly employed; so if an American has any world humanitarianism in him he will necessarily turn for attempts at benevolence to these poorer lands of Europe. Here they need the benefits of private fortunes; in America all we need is better government and only four wheels to a cart."

An approving nod from Athena led him along further. "At all events I am trying to find out the right way and at that I am greatly puzzled, for I don't want to make any mistake, and thus far haven't found a really practical way to begin."

"The opportunity will present itself," encouraged Athena.

"Yes, but how and where? What I do, I want to do right and not for the credit of myself, but for the credit and glorification of my country, to which I owe everything." His eyes deepened as he looked at her.

"I want to show these Europeans that we are not all 'Dollar Chasers,' as they believe us to be. I am glad that you taught me the meaning of those French words chasseurs au dollar; in fact, the only ones that I have ever learned, but which from having revolved them over in my mind so much, I believe that I can even properly pronouce."

He puffed for a moment at his Havana and then said with an emphasis of resolution on every word.

"I am going to show our European friends that there are kinder appellations to give us than 'Dollar Chasers.'

"Of course, with their different ideas as a class division—with their aristocracy to divide up their classes rather than

mere money alone, I suppose that they over exaggerate our own consideration of money—and the work which you will do among them will do everything to correct their wrong impression of us," said Athena.

"Yes, and it is only in this way that we can convincingly deny that we are mere 'Dollar Chasers.' So I want to get the thing started as soon as possible, for I am getting old—old, very old."

He stopped abruptly, for he knew that his daughter did not like to have his memory go back to such extremes of perspective, for it reminded her all the more keenly that he was already an octogenarian; that every day was bringing closer the time of death's inevitable separation.

"You see," he continued, as they strolled down toward St. Mark's, "I commenced to travel really too late in life to know how to go at things over here or even to find sympathy with any national institution or racial custom other than those of my own country. They may call us a nation of boasters if they wish, poke fun at the gaudiness of our flag, and say that we are always making the eagles on our dollars screech, but they can't get away from the fact that the emblem of 'Old Glory' represents more brotherhood of man and actual social justice than the world has ever known before. Do you know, daughter," he continued, pulling out another black cigar, carefully cutting it with his pen knife, and then lighting it caressingly, "do you know?" he repeated, as with his hand he struck away the first few puffs of smoke that the breeze blew toward his daughter, "speaking along another line, I would very much dislike to think that you, the only one left me in the whole world, might ever, by any possible chance, have-, well, any sort of affection towards one of these noblemen just because of his social prestige and lineage."

Athena raised her hand protestingly.

"Like father, like daughter," she laughed.

"I want to be broad-minded," continued the old man, "and it would be very narrow of me to condemn a man just because he happened to be a duke or something of that sort. Why, of course," he declared, with unusual impetuosity for one of his years, "a man is hardly more to be blamed for that sort of thing than a Negro is to be blamed for his color. Except, of course," he added reflectively, "a duke could, if he foreswore his allegiance to his king or emperor, become an American citizen—, but I wouldn't give much for such a fellow anyhow; I am not very long for the fellow who breaks a pledge or violates an oath."

Athena laughed approvingly, and the sparkle in her and in her father's eyes as they looked at each other, showed how keenly their natures responded.

Colonel Ward, and he was justly entitled to the appellation by the American custom of courtesy, was a man whose whole long life had been spent in thought-thought, which from an European standpoint, might have been considered to have run in too deep and too narrow channels of mental activities, but nevertheless, his thought had at times, and at all crucial moments, been as substantial as a cannon ball. He was a man who had succeeded from many points of view. He had made money honestly; made it not by luck but in spite of it, and only after his hopes had been often buried under the ashes of disappointment. And more than mere money making, he had succeeded as a representative in Congress in promoting legislation which curtailed and at length finally stopped some of the iron fisted grabbing of the predatory interests. And yes, even more than that, he had made himself that most to be envied man, a beloved father and an idolized husband.

His wife had followed along with him from the rocky path of his adversity out upon the broad sweep of his years of opulence; and then (two years before this story commences) she had stopped by the wayside for her eternal rest.

After her death, the father and daughter commenced to travel abroad, for up to that time they had been perfectly satisfied to remain in their own wonderful America, Mrs. Ward, being greatly averse, on account of her delicate health, to take the long journey across the ocean, and the Colonel and his daughter unwilling to go without her.

But in their desire for a change of surroundings, after

his wife's death, the Colonel refitted his palatial yacht, which for a couple of years had been the envy of Newport, and prepared it for a long cruise of the Mediterranean.

The jaunt had been a delightful one; they had first left the yacht at Toulon and run up to London to visit some old American acquaintances, whom they induced to come back and join them on their cruise around Italy to Venice.

It was through these American friends that they met the family of Count Coste, a meeting which was very pleasant to all concerned. The decorum and extreme politeness which marked even the intimacy of the house party were especially gratifying to the old American to whom the thoughtfulness of every detail in language and conduct was endearing in its demonstration of friendship.

On that particular morning, as they strolled about the piazza, and finally stood under the column of St. Mark's Lion, looking out to where the Colonel's yacht lay at anchor, some thought of the last remarks he had made, still lingering in the mind of the old man, made him continue.

"Now, for example, that young Count Coste last night, the son of our hostess, the chap, eh—, eh—, well, the one you gave the flower to. He wasn't such a bad sort of a fellow, was he?"

Athena turned her gaze questioningly upon him.

"I mean," the Colonel hastened to add, fearful that she might not understand, "I mean that he was a nice, clean-cut sort of a fellow, who, if he had a chance to be born over in a hustling, wide-awake country like America, without a lot of coronets fussed out on his handkerchief, and, I suppose, his underwear, too, for that matter, to remind him that he belonged to a very ancient and very dead old family, that he would have made quite a mark for himself. But last night, as I was being shown through the Club, there he sat, a cigarette between his teeth, and with spots on his cheeks as red as a boiled lobster, and he just about as useless to himself and his family, from what the others told me about him, as one of the coronets on the inside of his hat is to himself."

"He is a very brilliant talker," merely remarked Athena.

"Yes, that's the first thing they teach young noblemen: to learn to talk a lot of languages. Now, an American, if he spent as much time in learning languages as they do over here, why, we would have to give up a big part of the time we now devote to hustling."

"Yes, but father, you remember that you had both a French and German governess for me," she expostulated.

"Yes, for you," remarked her father. "For you were a girl; for the accomplishments of women should be just about what they are for a nobleman feminine. But had you been a boy instead of a girl, I would have let you stop right at the good old United States speech and with the Hoosier twang at that."

Athena laughed as she placed her hand on his arm affectionately.

"But why pick on this poor wounded count?" she asked. "Why do you single him out as an example of what a man should not be?"

"Wounded, did you say?" asked the Colonel with a new and sudden interest. "Ah, yes—I had forgotten that he had been wounded. Now I remember, the Duchess mentioned it."

"Yes," returned Athena. "Then his sister told me all about it. He was shot right through the side in Tripoli while leading his company of Bersagliere in a charge in which half of them were killed."

"Well! Well! That does change my opinion of him considerably, Funny that they did not remind me of it at the Casino when they pointed him out as a most inveterate gambler and as a son who would likely prove the ruin of his whole family. Well! Well! Wounded. I wonder if it is anything like I got at Gettysburg. I really would like to meet the young fellow again and exchange experiences," and then he added, all awake with interest, "and leading his company, was he?"

"Yes," responded Athena. "That's the reason I gave him the flower, although he did not know it. . . . I gave it to

him because he was brave like my father always is," and she drew his arm in hers and looked up into his eyes.

A great black gondola shot around the canal to where the water lapped against the stone stairs leading to the piazza, and a swarthy gondolier bounded toward them, cap in hand, exclaiming:

"Si aspetta, Signore!"

"Ah, they came looking for us sooner than I thought," remarked the Colonel, and carefully conducting his daughter, he ushered her down into the cushioned interior of the gondola where the Duchess di Manaldi awaited them.

IV ALBANIA

They all stood around the spacious mahogany table of the social hall on Colonel Ward's yacht, passing the plans and maps about and occasionally consulting the larger ship chart spread out before them.

"Of course, I wish the ladies to decide as to the details of the cruise, since nothing except the weather can interfere with it from day to day. So from here we shall strike off for Corfu," said Ward, turning to the skipper of his yacht.

"Very good, sir," responded the skipper. "If you wish for a little adventure we might touch at Durazzo. Having been a soldier yourself, perhaps it might interest you to see how the insurrection is proceeding there."

"Ah, yes," returned Ward, his interest suddenly awakened. "They are just carving out that country from the surrounding territory, aren't they? It is a capital idea. Just think of visiting a country all made to order by a few strokes of diplomatic pens. What are the last reports had from Albania?" he asked of Count Coste.

Coste for a moment lost his poise. He knew that the question had been innocently directed to him, but for a

moment was disturbed to have his possible father-in-law (ah, would that "possible" eventualize?) ask him, as the probable King of Albania, how that particular country was faring. His mind flashed back in remembrance of Magnus, and in the moment of regaining his mental balance, he felt again satisfied that the intention of that political potentate was to make Miss Ward, the Queen American Dollars of Albania, and he, Count Coste, the King.

"Oh, it is the same old story of races and religions," he returned when he had recovered himself. "You see, there are the Greeks—, the Epirotes, who want to secede to the mother country of Greece and who are communicants of the Greek Church; then there is Essad Pacha, and his Mussulman followers, all Mohammedan, who want to do whatever the Epirotes don't want to do, and then there are the Catholic Albanians who are absolutely resolved likewise to oppose anything either the Greeks or the Mussulmans propose. Then besides that," he continued, as he saw the interest with which Ward was following him, "there are the political intrigues of different nations who have their axes to grind."

"Seems rather complicated, doesn't it?" remarked Ward. "Who is the master of the situation; that is, who is the ruler?"

Coste hesitated, and wished for Magnus to come to advise him what to say, but after a moment's reflection, concluded that there would be no harm in enlightening the (as he thought very probable) prospective father-in-law of the first King of Albania.

"The powers haven't as yet appointed one," he explained. "The country is still under military control by joint agreement. I understand that to start the new kingdom they will guarantee a bond issue of fifty million lire which, considering it is only ten million dollars in your money, seems to be a small sum to initiate a government for two millions of people."

"Yes," confirmed the Colonel. "That's only about five dollars a head. But I suppose the people are resourceful

of themselves, are they not? We started our American government on nothing but promises and without a nickel in the treasury."

"Alas, no. The Albanians are not like the Americans. They have been so long," returned Coste, now finding himself in smoother water, "under the despotic rule of the Turk that they hate all forms of government, and nearly every family wants to be a law unto itself. It is a country where the murderer is praised, but where even the petty thief is shot. They are a fierce lot of brigands, all of them; but I am sure that with the right sort of government they could be built up into a splendid little self-sustaining nation."

"But how does it happen," asked Ward, "that a country so near progressive Italy should be so backward? Even the rule of the Turk wouldn't stop their development if they

had any enterprise in them."

"Granted," returned Coste, "but we, even, have some parts of Italy that are not further advanced than the best parts of Albania. Then, it is a very mountainous country and grazing is preferred to farming, and there has been absolutely no attention paid to the possible mineral wealth. Some of the Epirotes are extremely progressive, and by going to Egypt and Russia and even remoter parts of the world have accumulated vast fortunes. Some say that it is these rich Epirotes who are now fomenting trouble again in Albania so that it may secede and become a part of Greece."

"Two million people and ten millions of dollars," . . . murmured Ward and then inwardly reflected, "just a fifth as many Negroes as we have in the United States and only about as much as my last annual income. Ten millions wouldn't go far in helping the Negro along in America, for every dollar of mere boost may mean to the Colored Man a push backward. But think here of the chance," he continued, arguing with himself, becoming oblivious to all else about him. "Think of only fifty million lire guaranteed by the powers. . . . Supposing that I should add another fifty, yes, a hundred, two hundred million lire, to that amount

and take a part in its game of politics. Would it be of any use and permanent value to that newly created nation in its struggle for that neutral independence?... Would it not mean perhaps eventually that some way could be found to mold them into a Republic fashioned after American ideas?"

The old man's mind ran riot with the greatness of the opportunity. It was simply colossal! . . . To what better use could money be put than starting a new nation off on the real American road of political success, although far removed and remote from the land of its benefactor.

He passed his hand over his forehead as he glanced toward where the green ribbon of the Grand Canal meandered out into the sea, reflecting the cupola of San Georgiani. Then turning to Coste, he slowly asked:

"And bloodshed-has-there been much yet?"

"Unfortunately, yes. The Epirotes recently killed a few hundred at Koritza and burned about twenty villages. About five thousand people are homeless. Then they are shooting even at the schools and the armed factions seem to be preparing for general racial attacks and counter attacks on all three sides."

"And a good government would stop all this, would it not?" asked Ward.

"Yes," responded Coste.

"Well, why don't the powers make a Republic instead of a kingdom out of Albania?" queried the old man.

"Ah, that I cannot tell," responded Coste, with a polite shrug of the shoulders. "No one can divine the aim of political intrigue, unless he be right in its midst, and even then one knows little about it."

"And who is to be King then?" asked Ward.

Coste looked out toward the sea and his voice said:

"I don't know."

But in his heart the answer came:

"It is I—I who will be King; and your daughter, . . . whom I love, shall be my Queen."

V A CHANCE OF RIVALRY

They did not even anchor at Durazzo. Only the men went ashore and that for only a very short time, but what Ward saw rent his heart with pity. Never before could he have realized that suffering, poverty, and misery could exist

among men noble in appearance.

"Yes," he remarked to Coste when they returned to the yacht, "all that these people need is government—good government—the sort that has made America great. Men with such physique, with such manly bearing and independent manners are not intended for poverty and misery. You are right when you said that they have been ground down by the Turks. You are right," he repeated, striking his hand down on the taffrail, "but supposing that the government which the powers establish for them won't prove just? Supposing the king should be crooked or weak, won't they be just as badly off?"

"Yes," responded Coste.

"Do you know just how the powers intend to unite the different factions?"

"Ah, no," responded Coste. "As I said before, I am not in the secret of things; but if I were I should recommend as you have suggested: giving them a government as near like that of America as possible."

"Yes," commented Ward. "I suppose that after all things could be so shaped as to give them a government like ours except that the President, as King, would hold office for life. Wouldn't it be possible to have a King whose office would die with him without descending to his heir?"

"We have, in a measure, that condition now prevailing in Austria," responded Coste. "Prince Ferdinand, if he ascends the throne, as he probably will after the death of Emperor Franz Joseph, will only hold the imperial office for life, and after his death, the descent will not carry down the succession of the throne to his children as they are inhibited from the imperial eligibility by reason of their mother being a morganatic wife."

"Well, who then will succeed Emperor Joseph?" asked

Ward.

"Presumably the oldest son of Ferdinand's brother."

"Well, there you see, the rank still descends in the same family," and a puzzled expression came over his face, clearing up as he continued:

"You see, there is where the trouble lays, the creation of a caste of nobility and the perpetuation of that caste. Now, it wouldn't be so bad if we could have kingdoms and empires as Napoleon established them, which would reform political work and then destroy themselves by the very heaviness of their attempts to crush." He tossed away his cigar and commented.

"But as far as poor little Albania is concerned, I think its only safety lies in making a Republic out of itself."

"Your American Republic is a great inspiration to the whole world," remarked Coste, with sincerity ringing in every word, "but do you know, we Italians, studying Africa very closely and paying for strips of it with our blood, wonder at your attempt in Liberia in trying to make a Republic out of the Black Men."

Ward shook his head slowly as he returned.

"Yes, that was perhaps a mistake, but you have different stuff among those Albanians."

The yacht was now well out at sea and the two men stood for a long time and silently looked at the receding coast line.

"You Americans are almost over-sympathetic, politically," remarked Coste.

"Well, we ought to be, for we ourselves have been favored politically as has perhaps no other great nation."

"One of your American millionaires has founded a school in Albania which appears to be doing much good."

"Yes, our guide yesterday told me of the institution.

I know the donor well and must write to commend him on his philanthrophy. It is well that we do our foreign missionary work near home as well as far from it. I have been much interested in Negro institutional work and then they got me interested in the vice-commission's efforts. The thought occurred to me yesterday that those Albanians are entitled to their tithe of charity more than any people I have yet known."

"I am glad that you feel that way," warmly commended Coste, "for a man of your—your—influence could do a great work among them and help greatly toward the redemption of an ancient and still noble race."

Ward did not take the personal reference to himself as a compliment. He stood and reflected with his eyes still fixed upon the narrowing edge of shore and the gloomy mountains beyond.

Then he turned, leaning his back against the rail, and plunging his hands in his pockets, said in a voice whose words seemed to measure themselves with the churn of the turbine beneath them—a voice that came particularly clear—clear as if from a person calling over the calm and silent water, although the rush of the waves was loud about them.

"We are never too old to commence great works of charity, young man. I am going to try to do something for that decadent country. Will you try to help me?"

"Yes," answered Coste, and he felt strangely drawn toward the old man in whom every sympathy seemed to be suddenly awakened. Then Coste's face for a moment darkened as he thought of Magnus, and he again condemned himself for becoming a part to the conspiracy, whatever it was. But, as he looked back over the ribbon of coast with the beetling mountains piling up one after the other above it, ambition surged with the blood coursing through his heart, and his brow lifted higher as he gazed again on the land of which, in his fancy, he might some day be King.

The Duchess with Athena and Cornelia came toward them. "Did you know," asked Athena of Coste, "that there

are to be others join our party at Corfu? Two gentlemen, an ex-Austrian ambassador and a German gentleman who knows all about Greece."

"Yes," remarked Coste, and then remained silent as though he feared that he might by some word betray the fact that it was at his instigation and at the command of Magnus that he had had his mother obtain for Magnus and another, both strangers to Ward, an invitation to join them at Corfu for the Grecian cruise. Again his heart rebelled at the remembrance that he had entered into the irrevocable service of Magnus; then it lightened at the thought that undoubtedly Magnus was joining them at Corfu after making a hurried survey of the political conditions in Albania really in Coste's own interest.

"It is a pity that there are not more, for there is much room to spare and I always seem to enjoy the yacht best when it is filled up," said Ward.

"Yes," remarked Coste as his eye ran up the long length of the deck. "A private yacht of these dimensions really belongs to those of kingly rank," and then as the old man turned his gaze upon him, his embarrassment was so obvious as to merely bring the words:

"I suppose that is the way you measure the appropriateness of things in your circles of nobility. But, do you know, the poorest sort of a decent Albanian would be as welcome a guest in this yacht as a King, if he pleased the rest of the company."

There was a pause before Coste, in a desire to change the conversation, remarked.

"Then there will be altogether for the cruise, you and your daughter, my mother and sister, the two new-comers at Corfu, and myself—seven in all."

"And perhaps we shall be joined at Piraeus by the son of an old American friend, Timothy O'Rourke, a chap who has been in the Balkans getting material for a book on the Balkan War. He is famed as an author and now writes particularly on war subjects; you will find some of his books in the library. I have always admired his writings and when

I learned from his correspondence in the newspapers that he was still in Greece, I cabled him to join our party, and to this he responded that he would do so, if possible."

"So that will make eight persons in all; three women and five gentlemen," said Coste reflectively, as though measuring up any chance of rivalry for the heart of Athena, and he sighed deeply as he turned to pace up and down the length of the deck.

VI AT CORFU

A message from Magnus sent regrets that he and the other invited guest would be delayed for a day before they could join the party at Corfu, and as the message was passed around from one to another, Athena remarked:

"The delay will give us a chance to see something of Corfu. Years ago I remember reading a romance in which the hero came down here in search of a cure for consumption, and ever since then I have been interested in Corfu."

"Corfu is really a wonderful place," remarked the Duchess, "there are very pretty motor drives all about the island, built under the British administration."

Coste was glad of the delay, for it would, he thought, give him something of a chance to be alone with Athena. He therefore so arranged the party that, after motoring about, he and Athena were the last to follow up to the top of the castle.

It was an ecstatic scene; the high facades and sloping roofs of the high buildings of the town closely blocked and squared, fringed in on one side by the gleam of cypress groves and beyond by the indigo of the sea with the tide lapping in from the glowing serpentine length of the mountains opposite, with here and there a felucca turning its colored sail to the wind.

Deeply affected by the beauty beneath and beyond her,

Athena turned suddenly to find Coste's burning eyes gazing deep into hers. . . . She flushed uneasily and threw her pose from one limb to another as she looked down directly beneath her to the cragged rocks of the castle's base. The bell in the square church tower beneath pealed out, and she waited until the full stroke of the hour was struck before she again glanced toward him, but avoiding the fullness of his gaze. Yes, he was handsome; that she admitted to herself, and brave—there could be no question of that—his eyes had a thrill and a light in them, a depth of fire that affected her strangely-she did not know how-only that she felt that he should not look at her that way. She had never known an American to ever look at her so deeply, . . . even on the longest sort of an acquaintance, and her dignity was somewhat perturbed as she sensed, although she still avoided his glance, that he was waiting to repeat that soul gazing, as the thought for the moment occurred to her. But casually calling attention to some part of the sea view as they turned to go, his formal reassuring voice put a new interpretation on the incident, and she merely dismissed further reflection, with the final thought.

"Ah. These Italian noblemen are a pecular lot, and perhaps rather vain of the beauty of their eyes."

But as they made their way down from the castle, she was relieved to find that Coste no longer attempted to gaze into her eyes, and in her innocent way almost felt inclined to censure herself for having apparently misjudged his conduct. She commenced to take a new and vivid interest in him, admired his soldierly bearing, his clear bronzed complexion, the perfect outline of his features, the metallic clearness of his voice, and the grace of his manners.

There was nothing of the flirt in Athena. She knew that sometime she would marry and she felt that all that she had of herself in thought or action—every detail of her woman's dignity should be delivered intact and wholesomely preserved to the man whom fate and law would eventually decree hers. This she had learned from her mother and to this she held as to a religious precept which daily prayers,

with thoughts of her mother, kept ever alive. Not that she was unemotional or devoid of sentiment, for there were none whose natures could more thrill to love, the great symphony of nature. But she simply looked upon herself as being but a part of some final integral whole into which she would only perfectly and ultimately fit by safeguarding herself from all taint of a sentiment that might destroy the whole peace of her future wellbeing.

Hence, she considered all men in a matter of fact way. She felt that she would never marry during the lifetime of her father—that she belonged to him—every hour of her life. When he had passed away, as had her mother—well, then, alone she would be free to become a wife and a mother—for to Athena, with her normal, naturally developed nature, there would be no use in marrying if she would not bear children. She knew that her father was rich—one of the richest men in all America—from what she had read of his income tax in the papers—an income tax on ten millions of dollars income a year. She presumed that the money would be hers and that was an added reason why she would need a husband—to take care of the money, that good might be done with it, for woman-like, she dreaded the responsibilities of great wealth.

As she and Coste walked down along the great walls of the fortress, there was some thought of this money responsibility entering her mind. She supposed that she was what they would call in Europe an American heiress. . . . She had read of American girls selling themselves, money and all, for titles, and she recoiled from the thought. She was too American to reconcile her woman's dignity with a base barter and exchange for mere title of lineage.

"But what," reflected she, as they walked along, "what if by the measure of fate she was to be linked up with a man such as he who now walked beside her? Would there be happiness?"

And her heart found its answer as she looked ahead at the tall form of her father striding along with his familiar step. "No. Only in a man like her father—a man of his people and his traditions would she find that happiness continued, which she had known in the simple, truthful life of her own home."

"Corfu doesn't seem much like a Greek town, does it?" asked Coste, as they continued their walk over the Esplanade.

"I don't know. You see, I am going to Greece for the first time."

"Ah," returned Coste, "for the first time? I imagined that you must have been there before. I don't know why."

"O!" she exclaimed, "perhaps it may be because of my name. You see, my mother, before she married my father, was a teacher of Greek and Latin in a small American college. She had never been to Greece but was fascinated with its history and so she named me Athena. I am sorry to say that both father and I have oftimes been almost ashamed of the name—it seemed so odd and un-American—, but dear mother enthused both father and me with a real love for Greece—and we have each of us been looking forward to this cruise with great anticipation."

"Your father took considerable interest in the Albanians," Coste allowed himself to say, without for the moment thinking what it would lead up to.

"Ah, yes. The two other guests whom your mother suggested inviting, are coming over from that country, aren't they?"

"Yes. They seem to have gone beyond Koritza on some mission," he responded, and then in a preoccupied way, asked:

"Do you know anything about European politics?"

"No. Not even much about American politics."

"Well, in Albania they are looking for a King and a Queen, for the kingdom has just been constituted."

"Looking for a King and a Queen? Why, how romantic—almost like a fairy tale, isn't it?" laughed Athena. "It must be then a case of the office seeking the man—as father says—seeking the man, . . . and the woman too," and then she impulsively added:

"I shouldn't think that it would be hard among such fine families as you have in Venice to have a variety to choose from. Now, you, for example—how would you like it?" she continued in impulsive merriment. "How would you like to be King?"

He turned and suddenly flashed a thrilling light out from the depths of his dark eyes and murmured so low that she

barely heard him:

"I would give my life to be King of the most wretched of lands if—if my—the Queen were to be. . . . "

She understood his declaration and the merriment on her face vanished in an expression of fright at the thought of its complete utterance, but raising her hand in a gesture of protest, she still suffered herself to be escorted by the Count back to the rest of the party.

VII THE KINGDOM

Magnus and Herr Haiden, the other invited guest, put in their appearance a little earlier than expected; Magnus heavy and elegantly ponderous as ever; his companion surprisingly handsome.

By the warm introductions of Coste, the two were made perfectly at home, and after a bath and a change of linen, came out on deck to laughingly recount their brief but exciting adventures in Albania.

"That country is simply irresistible," remarked Magnus.
"To me it is as irresistible as the tobacco habit. I beg
that you ladies will forgive me if I appear to be continually
smoking in your presence, but the fact is that this is not
a cigarette at all," and he held the porcelain out daintily
before him. "The doctors absolutely forbade my smoking
some months ago, so I had this imitation cigarette made of
hollow china in which, from time to time, my man puts a

little menthol mixture. Thus I am able to deceive myself

most delightfully and at times forget that there is such a thing as tobacco," and he laughed a long, low, deep chested laugh, whose contagion went around the whole group.

"Yes," he continued, "Albania is simply irresistible. I have been over it continually, time and time again, and every visit I make I swear will be the last—its a sort of habit with me, as I suggested, only I can't get away from it like tobacco. And now that they have made a Kingdom out of what was practically ancient Epirus, its political fascination makes it all the more irresistible."

"In your travels in Albania, have you ever found any indication of natural resources?" asked Ward.

"Yes, potentially tremendous—great," answered Magnus, "colossally rich in possibilities. Their exports of live stock, wool, timber and cereals could be increased twenty fold in a very short time. Then there are the running waters and the underground rivers and the deep mountain lakes at high elevation, all of which, by tunneling, would give abundant water power for the development of the mineral wealth; and all this right in the very heart of Europe, waiting development."

"And what about the people?" asked Ward.

"About the same as everywhere else, except rather more ferocious, brave even, if you will, very jealous of individual rights, but a handsome, warlike, though uncouth people, with a decided appreciation of money. As soon as they find it will be to their advantage to support a government, they will do so in real earnest. Don't you think that that about expresses the case?" asked Magnus, turning to Haiden, who stood attentively listening.

"This is my first visit to Albania," responded Haiden, but I was indeed deeply impressed with the possibilities depending upon the people. They are," he continued impressively, "as purely and directly descended as any modern race can be from the ancient. They come direct from the Illyrians and the Epirotes, and if blood and race count for anything, they ought to eventually grow into a nation of great use to the world in spite of their small number."

They all remained silent waiting for him to continue There was a masterly tone in his voice, a dispassionate control of his thought and an inviting expression of the face. He held his listeners by the very spell of his per sonality; handsome in bearing and feature, strong in word and gesture.

"I did not know that Albania really was so interesting," remarked the Duchess. Athena, looking at Haiden with the simple steadfastness of a child, urged:

"Please tell us some more about Albania."

He returned her glance only for a second, although she still continued to look at him.

"Ah," he remarked gallantly. "My companion knows much more about Albania than do I," and he gave a cur military gesture towards Magnus.

"Not at all, Colonel," returned Magnus. "I only know the body—the material body—of Albania as evidenced in its commercial, mining and industrial possibilities—buyou—you know its spirit for you are a master in that realm."

Haiden lightly raised his hands as if the compliment were to him distasteful, then after a pause continued:

"All I feel warranted in saying is that if the Powers really will keep their hands off Albania and protect its neutrality, there is no reason why within a decade or so it may not make very remarkable advance, for, as has been hinted, as soon as the different racial and religious factions see that it is to their advantage to stand by an honest and efficient government, they will give up their differences and unite."

"They ought, at all events to have their chance," remarked Ward in a tone that brought Haiden's large blue eyes in a direct focus with his own.

"Yes. They ought to have their chance," repeated Haiden slowly.

"And they will," added Magnus, sententiously."

"It seems to be a sort of a big missionary movement which is needed to get things started there, doesn't it?" suggested Ward.

"Yes," Magnus hastened to approve. "A missionary movement—a real crusade," and he turned his phantom cigaratte under his moustache caressingly.

"But, ladies, you are all standing," remarked Haiden. "May I not have the chairs brought for you?"

When the chairs came, Coste noticed that in spite of his efforts, Athena became seated beside Haiden and there was a twinge of jealousy in his quick Latin heart as he reflected:

"Well, at all events, he is not noble even with all his accomplished personality and will, therefore, not be eligible as the King of Albania." And then he began to wonder who Haiden really was.

VIII THE ROCK OF SAPPHO

"We understand," remarked the Duchess to Haiden as tea was being served on deck, "that you know all about Greece. I trust that you will not think that it is on that account that you have been invited to join the party, but my son's very dear friend," she continued, smiling towards Magnus, as she still addressed Haiden, "tells us that there is no one who understands the real spirit of ancient Greece better than you as it today speaks out of its ruin."

"I presume," laughingly returned Haiden, "that Greece must be to me what Albania is to the Baron," and he tipped his chin towards Magnus.

"It will be a great treat," joined in Ward, "to have Mr. Haiden explain things to us as we go along. My daughter and I the other day were saying that there is one service in travel that can never be purchased: the service of properly explaining the wherefore of things. I trust that it will not be an imposition upon Mr. Haiden if I start right in by asking him if he knows what promontory that strange maroon colored cliff is just yonder?"

"I am glad that you ask me," responded Haiden, "for I was aching to tell something about that wonderful cliff. It is none other than the Rock of Sappho. Do you know," he continued, leaning over the rail and looking at the sinister appearing headland, toward which they were rapidly steaming, "from my childhood on, Sappho of all personages of antiquity, has interested me most. I never have been able to believe that she was a libertine. To me she has always been the sweet singing, pure-minded poetess of an age of Pagan lust. I think that one reason why I followed my Greek so attentively in the Gymnasium was just because of the fragrance of her poetry which excited me to perhaps an almost thorough study of the ancient Greek. As a school lad I once tried to compose a poem in the language of Sappho herself, describing this very rock, writing it under what I thought to be a real inspiration when I first beheld this promontory. But I have long ceased any indulgence in poetic expression."

He paused, and then continued:

"It may interest you to know that it is claimed that this Isle of Levkas was really Homer's Ithaca, and this Leucadia Rock, where Sappho, to end her unhappy love, leaped into the sea, is on its southwest coast. But, the modern island of Ithaca lies over yonder," and he pointed to some low lying mountain cut off by the drop curtain of other mountains beyond, with the glimpse of villages built high up on terraced slopes.

They all stood and looked, held by the charm of the historic surroundings, the nervous tinkling of the bridge bell alone breaking the silence. Then Haiden pointed toward Oxia Island, the scene of the famous battle of Lepanto.

"See how its mountains reach up, with ribs of valleys between! It is entirely uninhabited, except for a few wild goats, whose haunts are even so secure as to escape the rifles of hungry sailors, who sometimes go there in the hope of replenishing their larders," continued Haiden. "There is nothing to connect the native savagery of Oxia with nearby civilization, is there?" his laugh answering his own question.

After awhile, all busied themselves with guide books and the yacht's library and during the rest of the voyage to Patras, Haiden was a continued object of questions.

"Now, you see why you are invited," heartily laughed Magnus, but with a deep-mooded deference and attachment apparent but unexplainable, as with strange devotion he looked at Haiden.

Late that afternoon they steamed into the screened harbor of Patras. The pump of the engines ceased, and the rasp of the chains gave them their first anchorage on their Grecian cruise.

They went ashore along a street with slovenly cafes advertised with such euphonisms as "Cafe Splendide," with sewer-like curbs to the sidewalks, from which the lazy sweeping of soiled attendants removed but little of the filth. In these, dogs nosed, dodging out from between the legs of the decrepit, nondescript, tramp-looking men, who worked away at their beads, with hands fast behind them, their backs and heads bent forward, incurious and unobserving, a sad picture of idle and soiled humanity.

"The filth of this hotel," exclaimed Haiden, pointing towards a tall hotel, with its sad imitation of a Parisian Boulevard front, "is hardly to be described. But when Greece does wake up and give good hotels to tourists, it will become a recreation ground to the whole world, for nowhere is nature more brilliant, nor the surroundings more inspiring, But the Greeks are going ahead fast; they are getting out of the lethargy and the misery of Turkish influence of which you still see indications. For example, just look at those big men boot-blacks sprawled out before their blacking kits, expectantly awaiting and satisfied with only a few leptai, although the vincyards and olive groves are demanding their services at seven drachmas a day,"

They visited the Castle for the view of Grabolina with its camel-like hump, behind which spread out the outline of the empurpled mountain, and then after a hurried circle of the noisome streets, they returned to the yacht to await the departure of the train for Olympia.

Ward had heard from his final guest O'Rourke, who from Athens had wired that he would follow them on down by a later train, joining them at Nauplia, to which point Ward had previously telegraphed that he was sending the yacht.

"I haven't been in Olympia for a number of years," remarked Haiden, after they were seated in their special compartment, which, in its tawdry and soiled upholstering, gave little evidence of being any sort of an approach to the train de luxe it was called. "I am afraid that Olympia will prove a disappointment to you. There are hardly any whole parts of the ruins standing upright and it is only by strong imagination that you will be able to reproduce the ancient glory of Olympia in your own mind."

It was dark when they arrived at the little station and were conducted by the guide to a hotel on the hillside, where, in the moonlight, the ancient home of the Olympian games looked like a graveyard of close built tombs.

Early the next morning they were up to make their visit to the ruins, Haiden acting as guide.

"Perhaps it was because Olympia was so different from the other parts of Greece that it became so attractive to them. See, everything about us looks quite un-Grecian, doesn't it? There are no high rocky mountains, no stretches of red or yellow soil, just this pretty little vale surrounded by pine-clad hills, dotted with grain fields, vineyards, and olive groves with the ribbons of the rivers unwinding among them."

His eyes rested upon Kronis Hill.

"Do you know what impresses me most in Olympia?" asked Haiden, and then when he had their attention, explained:

"Look, there is the hill of Kronis, a pyramid of Nature's greatest time resisting form, a hill mound crowned with pine. Everything beneath it has changed—all—all changed," and he spread his arms wide about him and then again pointed toward the hill. "Alpheos and Kladeos have time and again shifted their channels; all the cunning and craft that man conceived in the beautiful precincts of Olympia

as monuments to his genius and wisdom are laid low; but old Kronis still stands. Only a small part of its tree-protected sides have been washed or blown away. If an ancient Greek could come back to Olympia today, the only thing that he would recognize would be Kronis. See how his tawny sides are burnished from the green of the valley beneath and by the glorious sun which keeps the hill ever young."

Haiden led them up to the hill behind the hotel to show them, as he explained, an Elis village.

There was no pretense of streets; anything not fenced in by the walls of the houses themselves or by the thick hedges of the fields was a free passage for man and beast. The single church was the only building with glass-inclosed windows; the other houses had mere weather beaten, rusty hinged shutters, with sashed timbers walled in with rough stone of cemented masonry.

The front of the houses was only recognized from their rear by verandas, sometimes formed into a solid stone platform with a winding step to the second story, but more often simple wooden platforms upheld by a few upright timbers above whose balustrades the soft-toned rugs of Turkish designs were hung out for their airing after the night's use as bedding.

The roofs of the buildings were of tile, supported by a framework of cane and timbers blackened by the smoke of lamps and candles. In one corner of the single large white plastered room of each house was found the simple rude shrine of the patron saint with a light ever burning before it—, the clear light of olive oil. The floor of the room was of soft pine and had been scrubbed and cleaned until it splintered. A long trough-like bench, boarded below, served as a closet and above the remaining spaces of the walls were the few other simple articles of household furniture. Nearly every house had its cradles springing from iron frames from which peeped bright eyed infants, safe from tumbles by the restraining harness of ropes.

On the wall were hung spindle frames with ancient fire

arms laid lengthwise on pegs. The visitors looked with interest upon the simple surroundings with their patter of barefooted children and the cooing of babes as the swarthy, black-eyed mothers brought them glasses of spring water and Turkish sweets.

"One would almost envy these people—their simple, happy life," remarked Haiden as he showed them how the light, only entering from the recesses of the deep set windows above, made the room cool and comfortable and softened the pastoral sounds, which came from without, sweet and soothing, dominated at that moment with the chime of the church bell which they could see as they heard it through the open doorway, hanging from a tree trunk and cross branch.

Charmed and enchanted with their excursion under the guidance of Haiden, they took the train to visit the ruins of Messenia, profiting by a change of trains at Pyrgos to follow the length of its long principal street filled with swarthy, earnest-looking men, just feeling the first touch of Greek agricultural prosperity.

"Pyrgos," explained Haiden, "is becoming a very important town and is an example of what the Greeks themselves can do, but even at that you will notice that the shops are all filled up with foreign goods and it will be a long time before Greece can supply to itself even a small part of all its needs in the manufacture of its own splendid raw products."

It was still early in the afternoon when they arrived at the little station of Tsepherimini from which they were to make the excursion to the ancient ruins of Messenia.

"Tsepherimini is certainly a long name," said Ward. "Why doesn't the village pass an ordinance changing the name to something that won't take quite as much time to pronounce?"

Haiden laughed.

"It really doesn't sound so long in Greek," said he. "But you would suppose that they would be apt to do anything in this little town, because they ought to have

American enterprise here. Nearly every family has had one or more members who have gone to America and who have sent back their money for the upbuilding of the town."

The party took their horses and hastened to proceed to the monastery where they were to spend the night, before commencing the final ascent to the ruins.

"Greek monks are very hospitable," explained Haiden, but they close their gates at sundown, and if we do not get there by that time we shall have to camp out for the night. It would be dangerous in the darkness to try to get back to the village down over the rocky path.

They crossed a modern iron bridge, spanning a river filled with a gurgling, croaking chorus of monster bull frogs and after an hour's ascent came to a point with a wonderful view of Mount Taigetos, covered with snow. Eight villages lying in the valley beneath them or in the high foothills between were mantled with green fields and embowered in cypress groves that grew along the glimpses of the winding river.

They rested for a moment and then pressed on towards the shining sides of the monastery's walls, at which they arrived as the gowned monks were resting upon the platform lookout, enjoying an evening's rest after their hard day's labor in the fields.

A few friendly salutations with the monks and they stood waiting for the closing bell to sound, again enjoying the wonderful view, even more wonderful from that higher elevation than before.

Up from the slopes of the still valley beneath came the sound of sheep and cow bells, mingling with the piping tones of a shepherd's flute sounding above the low prayers of the monks. Then all was lost in the tones of the convent bells echoing down into the depths of the valley.

The monks disappeared; only a young, long-haired attendant remained, who, with a springing, mountain step, led them into the enclosure of the walls, and then the heavy gates locked upon them.

They looked about them curiously as there came to them

the songs of the evening birds and the gurgle of the spring which poured through the midst of the walled enclosure.

The party dispersed itself in the spacious, immaculate rooms which opened out upon the interior balcony. A simple repast of eggs, cheese, bread and wine was served and as they supped a quiet gathered over the convent only broken by the song of the splashing brook.

Athena stepped out upon the little creaking balcony of splintered pine, secured with iron supports to the wall of the monastery which looked down over the chasm below. The oil candelabra threw out a soft glow of light that sought out far and away down into the dark depths below, turning the fantastic rocks into weird goblin shapes. She stepped aside to avoid obstructing the light which streamed out from behind her. As she changed her position she heard a shutter creak open on its rusty hinges and then there was another stream of light reaching down into the valley, silhouetting the straight, soldierly form and the strong features of Haiden, who in a very light voice, was humming softly to himself but even whose light vibration showed a natural beauty and careful training.

She drew farther back into the darkness and reflected upon the novelty of being thrown into the company of those two splendid young men—representing the best of their types and nations—Haiden, the blond, blue-eyed Teuton, whose manner, grave yet inspiriting, bespoke courage unflinching and well considered; and then Coste, the dark-eyed Latin—impulsive and brave—dramatically brave. Yes. She must admit that they both appealed to her. . . . They had too much of the warm red blood of youth and the spirit of gentlemen not to produce some sort of an impression upon her. She tried to account within herself as to which she preferred, and thinking about them both as the call of the running stream came to her ears, she fell asleep.

IX MESSENIANS AND SPARTANS

"I have always, in my own mind, likened ancient Sparta to modern Germany," said Haiden, as they all stood looking down over the litter of stones, and the ruins of broken walls. "Nowadays every German is forced to be a soldier and he takes pride in the fact that crowded as he is in the center of Europe, he may have to sometime take his stand against a very considerable part of Europe. And to carry the comparison further, do you think," he asked, turning to Coste, "that one would be justified in comparing the Latin races to the ancient Messenians?"

"I see no objection to such a comparison," returned Coste with a sudden flash in his eyes. "The Messenians were a peace-loving people who built walls to defend themselves—whereas the Spartans were, as you say, a soldier race who loved war. I think that the comparison is very apt," he added ironically.

"Do you mean that Germany loves war?" returned Haiden somewhat warmly.

"Why not? Germany is continually preparing for war."

"Oh, let us not talk politics," interposed Magnus, "when we can enjoy such a view as that," and leaning his hand on the saddle of his horse, he pointed down into the valley.

"You are right," commended Haiden. "Besides, the time is too short for war talk, for there is only one train a day from Tsephermini to Nauplia and we will have all that we can do to get back to the station on time."

They hurriedly visited the ruins and then hastened to take the descent. They had had no breakfast and went into one of the wretched little *kafenia* of the village where all that was offered them were lemons, cheese and wine, but after repeated urging and a long search the ladies were supplied with an egg apiece, all that the town could furnish.

"You see," explained Haiden, "Greece is still only a

primitive agricultural country and the people sacrifice everything nowadays to get money to pay off the indebtedness on their farms. I warrant, however, that you were never before in a country where you found such lemons," and he dug his white firm teeth into the fresh rind and pulp of a large lemon. "See, you can eat them whole, rind and all."

They waited in a dingy house—a sort of a nondescript bar and village grocery store with only a few handfuls of provisions and a couple of goat skins of resinous wine and bottles of mastiqua liqueur—and then went on by rail and auto the wonderful way to Sparta.

The comparison made by Haiden of the Germans as Spartans and the Latins as Messenians came back to Athena frequently during the voyage as she looked at one or the other. Yes. Haiden did have much of what she had imagined the Spartans had in their natures in the days of their glorious history-stolid, self possessed and with a common sense brilliancy that brought the mind up to the highest level of independence, no matter under what conditions. And Coste-he the Roman Adonis with his graceful physique—as she watched him among the scanty vestiges of the famous city, beneath the great steeps of Tayegetus, . . . Yes-he was the dweller within the walled city, with the idle and uncertain security of bastions and turrets; but Haiden-Haiden-he was the man in the open, carefully saving his strength and practicing the art of his weapons, for the day when the call would come. His bones and sinews made up the wall of his strength and just as Messenia had fallen before those rural warriors of Sparta, would it not be that some day in the great murderous clash that the Spartan Teuton would vanquish the Messenian Latin?

They were enchanted with Nauplia with its trim little quay upon whose promenade the spray splashed in the cooling breezes of the night. There was a considerable garrison at Nauplia and both Coste and Haiden found a new companionship in making the acquaintance of the Greek officers who invited them to inspect the barracks.

The following morning they drove up to Tyrns and upon their return in the afternoon were pleased to find the yacht at length arrived, into whose clean comfortable quarters they found glad relief from the abomination of the hotel.

An early start the next morning brought them to Epidaurus an hour before the sun was at its fiercest. After eating their luncheon from the hampers in which the yacht's chef had carefully prepared it, they climbed about the amphitheatre, finally taking their seats high up on the last rows while Haiden recited some Greek verses. Then when they called to him to sing something, he sang the song that all soldiers love: "Die Beiden Grenadiere" and even Coste applauded.

X THE MARRIAGE VASE

O'Rourke had wired them from Athens that he would wait for them there, that he could not join them at Nauplia.

"O'Rourke's father was the Colonel of my first regiment in the Civil War," said Ward, "and was one of the bravest men I ever knew. He was wounded at Antietam. The son looked very much like him when I last saw him years ago. It will be a great pleasure to meet him again. I helped to get him his appointment to the Academy and he graduated at the top of his class."

"I remember him only vaguely," said Athena. "I hardly suppose that I should know him if I saw him, although when I was quite a little girl he created a stir in town when he came back home from West Point in his grey uniform."

"I suppose that he is what you would call a soldier of fortune," continued Ward. "He goes about the world not only as a newspaper correspondent but as a writer of wonderful books. He also, I am told, takes a hand from time to time in the wars himself, as the issue appeals to

him. He is certainly a remarkable writer-very forceful, great powers of description, always preaching sermons on the side of the poor against the rich. Perhaps he may find some fault with us because of mere money," smiled Ward as Coste and Haiden came and joined them.

"We were just speaking," he continued, "about Mr. O'Rourke, who joins our party here at Athens. I am sure that you will find him a very agreeable person, very talented and thoroughly American."

"I am certain that if he is thoroughly American that it will be indeed a pleasure to know him," remarked Coste gallantly, while Haiden merely said:

"Authors are always interesting."

Both of the younger men looked at Athena, their eyes showing their interest and the same question in the mind of both.

What effect would this new person have upon the party as far as Athena was concerned, for both confessed, but only to themselves, their deep sentiment for Athena. have been otherwise than interested, they both argued, would not have been human. Each looked upon the other in as yet a rather undefined way as being a rival, and each begrudged every look, every glance, every word that she bestowed upon the other. So now, alas, another man-an American—evidently comparatively young and undoubtedly attractive was to be added to the party-another rival—another entrant. . . .

Coste's mind went back to Corfu when he had betrayed himself to Athena as they were walking across the Esplanade, and Haiden thought of Sappho Rock when he had discovered in those first hours of meeting that he had met the woman of his life. There is no other way by which the progress of love is more reminiscently marked with the joy of its acceptance or the disappointment of its denial, than in pleasure travel, for a single scene may present forever after a picture which makes for life much of its framework, the framework of gladness or regret when sentiment is awakened. To Coste, Corfu would always conjure up in his mind doubt; and Sappho's Rock would ever bring to the mind of Haiden a new born hope.

The streets of Athens were filled with soldiers. Even the school children were naval or military uniforms and the little lads marched to and from school to the sound of drums, for War Minister Venezelos, then at the zenith of his popularty, like Thucydides of old was trying to make every Greek lad a soldier.

The recent victories of the Hellenic forces in the concluded Balkan war, delivering over to Greece the cream of the whole disputed territory, elevated the Greeks to a most patriotic frame of exalted mind.

As they drove down the Rue de Stade to their hotel in the Place de Constitution, Ward's party wondered at the interminable line of officers and men clanking along with their side arms.

"Athens will be a great tourist city when once they have it well watered, for the water supply and sewage disposal are the two great problems which confront the Greek capital today," said Haiden. "We were lucky in being able to secure reservations at the only good hotel in the city, for Athens is full of soldiers and politicians, who are here to sharpen their axes upon the new grinding stones which the fortune of war has given them. By the way, if you will allow me, I am going to reverse the usual order of sightseeing in Athens, and we will not visit the Acropolis, if you will follow my suggestion, until we have done all the other principal sights. Right after luncheon, if you are willing, we will drive to the Dipylon, the ancient Athenian cemetery."

"Quite a cheerful way of commencing a visit to Athens," laughed Magnus, "but as long as we are not actually attending a funeral of my own hopes, I presume we shouldn't complain."

Haiden conducted them to the ancient burial ground, explaining:

"One thing that struck me on my first visit to China was the fact that the Chinese still continue the ancient

custom observed both by the Athenians and Romans of burying their dead just outside the city gates and by the side of the road leading to them. The Dipylon was the chief gateway to Athens as its name, 'Double Gate,' indicates. Just outside the Dipylon these funeral monuments and sepulchres were placed. After I have shown you the Equestrian Relief and the interesting tomb representing a lady at her toilet, and a few other of the more remarkable monuments, I am going to have you particularly study the marriage vases of Loutrophoros stones. These show the pitcher in which the water was brought for the marriage bath. It is found only on the graves of the unmarried.''

They passed down the dusty road of the excavation and at first passing them unnoticed, he brought them back to the Loutrophori.

"You know," he said, "these simple tombs marked by steles, with the marriage vase in relief, have always strangely affected me. Perhaps I am too romantic, but to me a romance weaves itself about each one and I ask myself, 'Who was she? Who was he? Who was the lover who was left behind to mourn before that marriage—the ambition of their young lives—could be consummated?' Perhaps even at the moment when they were preparing for the happy ceremony, death stepped in and darkened the life of the survivor forever. And now look," he continued as he pointed to the tombstone, "the marriage vase is covered with snails and grown about with weeds, with only here and there a struggling flower amid the noisome ruins and dirt; and from the stone coffin leer the dry, fleshless bones."

They followed his recital as he still reflectively continued: "But among all the other mutilated statues, these marriage vases, because of their simple form, seem best to have escaped the hand of the vandal and the mutilation of time. All the pretentious emblems of the mighty are largely destroyed; yet these simple steles of the marriage vase still look out with their whitened faces just like yonder little flower growing among the weeds."

He looked long at the vases and then continued:

"There is a splendid collection of Loutrophori in the National Museum and there is hardly anything cut in marble which excites my emotion more as I try to read from the carved relief something of the romance of life and the sorrow of death, for all of these vases are really the shrines of virtuous maidens about whose sickbed loving hands reached out in protest against the untimely separation."

They stood in the scorching sun, silent under the fascination of the surroundings. The sound of purling water through the aqueduct came to them as it harmonized for a moment with the song of birds, until harshly broken by the rasping jangle of a trolley car beyond, which, when it had gone its way, again left them silent.

Athena looked long at the marriage vases and glancing up, she saw the eyes of both Coste and Haiden fixed upon her, suddenly she grew embarrassed and then felt rebellious at her confusion.

"How silly," she reflected, "that the mere suggestion of marriage in the presence of these two men should at all disturb my mind. Indeed neither of them could think that my marriage could have anything to do with either of them."

She commenced to feel that she was not enjoying the trip as much as she wished. There was something uncanny about that visit to the Dipylon cemetery. Graveyards did always make her feel moody and depressed anyhow, and standing in the midst of these tombs, which threw the mind back so many hundreds and hundreds of years before, with even some of the skulls within the stone sepulchres grinning out at her, put her in a distressingly lugubrious frame of mind. She did not again glance either at Coste or Haiden, until just as they were passing out of the gateway, by sheer accident she looked at Haiden as he stood aside to let her pass. Their eyes met. In the meeting her confusion vanished, and she returned his glance long and steadily. Then in a frightened way she tried to deny to herself that she at all liked him.

XI O'ROURKE APPEARS

On the morning after their visit to the Dipylon, O'Rourke put in his appearance.

He was already in the bepalmed lobby of the hotel talking with her father when Athena saw him, and she felt that it must be he, although her memory was a blank as to the passing glimpse of him years before. She had read some of his books and greatly admired him as an author. Rather unsophisticated as to literature, an author was to her a wonderfully mysterious personage. She rather half dreaded meeting him. His books of travel were so wonderful, and then the power of imagination, with the ability to create out of nothing but the practice of experience, real men and live women who lived on throughout life's memory as if known in flesh and bone—, that power, to her, was overwhelming.

So it was with some timidity that she saw her father bringing O'Rourke towards her. She was confused and hardly able to account to herself whether he really were handsome or not. She felt, however, that meeting him was an event in her life—a real event—like seeing the Dipylon yesterday. Yes, an event; not merely an experience.

"I am glad to know you," she heard his full resonant voice say as he stood before her. . . . She murmured some formal expression in return.

"I could pick you in a crowd just because you still look so much like your father," remarked Ward as the three drifted over toward the divans on the shaded veranda.

He remained standing until he had seated both of them, and then as he himself lightly dropped down on to the cushions, she became conscious of the fact that he was powerfully muscular, with a rugged, strong-featured face, deep chest and long, massive, sloping shoulders. She watched his hands—hands browned and roughened with ex-

posure, the white crescent of whose nails, deep sunken and immaculate, shone chalky white against the deep tan of his fingers.

She noticed that everything he had on seemed slightly worn and yet so immaculate that it seemed new. She suddenly found an interest in his cravat, a simple four-in-hand which had been so skillfully tied and with such an unwrinkled, well-fitting knot that she imagined him standing entirely independent of a mirror looping the silk around his collar with those deft and powerful fingers.

As he adjusted himself in his seat, she caught a glimpse of a fountain pen, snugged up alongside a vest pocket notebook. She wondered why such details interested her.

"Ah," thought she, answering her own query, "it is because this man is a worker—a real worker."

"We have been much interested in following your career. You have made good use of your life. They tell me that your new novel had the largest sale of any fiction last year," said Ward.

O'Rourke did not thank him for the recognition, but gathering his hands together so that the thumb and finger tips joined, looked out over into the garden of the King's Palace.

"I hope that my books will do some good," he said.
"I try to put a sermon into every chapter—a sermon that will help some one somehow. There are not enough days in a year nor years in a person's life to neglect a single opportunity to try to do good."

"You authors have a wonderful chance for well doing,"

commented Ward.

"Yes. Some authors, even in this day of little reading, are doing good and great good. But you know," he continued confidentially, "I sometimes become very discouraged, for I have never been able to get a publisher for the best book I have ever written. Everything today is measured upon the selling basis. It isn't so much the writing of the book as it is its boosting which counts. Now, I have already had published a whole shelf of fiction and on the

whole shelf full never gave as much of my heart and brain—yes, I would say—of my life itself, as I did on this particular book which no publisher will accept."

"What is the book?" asked Athena, her sympathy

aroused.

"It is a plea for the Chinese," he answered. "A statement of the wrong inflicted upon them by the Occident, and an attempt to show why they should be righted before the Chinese themselves in their own might and power shall adjust their wrongs themselves."

"Why wouldn't publishers take it?" asked Athena.

"Well, the answer always came that the English reading public looked upon the Chinese as they looked upon the Negro—a man without a soul—and they said that no one would buy a book unless there was real soul life in it. They admitted that they themselves were thrilled by the story, but declared that because of its alleged violation of the sentimental rule of fiction which governed the sale of books, they would not dare to undertake the speculation of its publication."

"But some day it will be published, won't it?" exclaimed Athena.

"Not in this generation, not unless I publish it myself," responded O'Rourke, "and I am traveling so much that I cannot even properly edit my manuscripts, let alone attending to the score and one intricate details which mean a books publication, circulation and sale."

"I presume that it is with publishers as it is with the rest of the business world," remarked Ward. "They really don't know what they do want beyond the given set standard into which their capital and work are narrowed. I know that the first start I got in life," he remarked, smiling grimly, "was by absolutely violating that rule of standard, for I bought a copper mine filled with water with the idea of holding it until somebody should invent pumps powerful enough to drain it. After I had bought the mine, within a very few weeks a fellow came along with a pump proposition which we patented together and eventually each of us made

more money a hundred times over, out of the pump than I ever did out of the mine," and the old man threw his head back with a light laugh, his eyes dancing with glee at the recollection.

"Mr. O'Rourke says he will be very glad," continued the old man, addressing his daughter, "to continue with us on the cruise. He has been in Epirus getting material for a new book and says that it is safe and practicable to make a run up into that country after we have visited Adelphi. Epirus is a part of Albania, you know."

"That would be very interesting," remarked Athena, and then added, as she gave O'Rourke a long look:

"My father tells me that you have traveled all over the world, two or three times over."

"Yes," responded O'Rourke in a matter-of-fact tone. "But it seems to me that only now am I commencing to travel, that all I have experienced is just a beginning. It reminds me, but quite inappropriately, of my first take-down after graduating from West Point. As a shave-tail I was stationed at Jefferson Barracks, and on one occasion, being invited to a social gathering in St. Louis, I happened to overhear the conversation of a lady with whom I had just been dancing. As I was seated in an awned veranda, she did not know of my presence. I first overheard the conversation when her companion asked of her: 'What do you think of Lieutenant O'Rourke?' Whereupon she responded: 'Oh, he is all right, except he is a graduate from West Point.' 'What do you mean?' asked the other. 'Why, simply,' she returned, 'that those West Point men get on my nerves, for everything in their whole life, no matter how old they get to be, dates from West Point, and whenever or however you meet them, they never fail to interlard their conversation with such expressions as: 'When I was at the Academy' or 'In my class at West Point' or 'Just before my graduation at the Military School,' which after you hear it repeated over and over again by every one from the young second lieutenant up to the grandfather-general wearies you just a mite. I don't see how any woman could bear to marry a West Pointer."

O'Rourke recited the dialogue drolly and they all laughed.

Then he dryly added:

"From that time on, one of the ambitious of my life was to get honorably out of the army, for after such an arraignment I felt that my whole life had been a failure and that only as a civilian would I commence to live."

"But you went through the Spanish-American War, did you not?" asked Ward.

"Oh, yes. Of course, as long as there was any fighting I could make the army life interesting, so after the Cuban campaign, I went over and remained in the Philippines until they appeared to be pacified. But before I was commencing to draw my second fogy of pay on five years' service, I resigned, and have been knocking around the world ever since, spending most of my time in countries where there was actual war. I was in the Chinese Revolution, after the Russian-Japanese War had finished, and since then have been spending most of my time in following up the troubles in the Balkan States."

"Don't you ever get tired of traveling, and particularly being in countries during war times?" asked Athena.

"No," he answered. "It is the sort of existence which seems to satisfy my love of adventure. Although I deplore war, there is an excitement in it which will always fascinate me."

"Aren't you ever going to return to America to live?"

"Oh, yes," he responded. "Some day I want to go back there to live and to die and I am prepared to return at any moment-if-if-, we should ever be involved in war," and then divining that some apology for his self-expatriation was appropriate, he added:

"My income with even all the books I have published is not large, and ekes out farther in Europe than at home, besides giving me material for my literary work."

At this point of the conversation Coste and Haiden came strolling from the breakfast room, with lighted cigars, both trim, fresh and immaculate from the night's rest and the morning's bath. Ward called to them:

"Come over. Here is the final member of our party," and then he said in a lower voice to O'Rourke:

"How shall I introduce you—as Captain O'Rourke?"

"No," responded O'Rourke with a waggish expression. "In the regular service I never got even as far as Captain, for we West Pointers, I must say, in order to corroborate the St. Louis young lady in her diagnosis of Academy shortcomings, had very slow advancements, and I never got beyond first lieutenant, and lieutenants, you know, are always called Mister, so I am plain O'Rourke, and plain Timothy O'Rourke at that."

They all smiled and after O'Rourke had shaken hands with the newcomers, Haiden asked:

"I presume you know Athens pretty well, Mr. O'Rourke."

"Oh, I know the points of the compass here and I have tried to read and feel myself back in ancient Athens during the several months I have been here altogether, but I can't say that I know it well in even a single one of its great inspirations."

"I merely asked," continued Haiden, "because I wish to have you help me arrange the program for the party. All that they have thus far seen is the Dipylon, with, of course, a distant view of the Acropolis, an actual visit of which I wish to reserve until the last. Now, I was about to propose that we visit the Temple of Mysteries at Eleusis since the dust will not be bad today and motoring there and back will be rather pleasant."

"I will gladly join you," responded O'Rourke, "and put myself under your conductorship. I haven't stopped in Eleusis for several years."

The motor swished them away and almost within the hour they had slowed down through the dusty streets of the village of Eleusis, finally coming up by the ruins of the triumphal arch that leads to the Temple of Mysteries. The glaring glint of sunshine threw the shadows clear and sharp over the steps leading up way beyond to the floor of solid rock, upon which had stood the Priests of the Temple, in those days of ages past, looking out for the inspiration of Nature in the resplendent blue of Salamis' depths beneath. As they gazed upon the yellow brown and the ivory tinted

rocks, there was just enough of the old arrangement of the templed precincts to make the imagination drive strong and fast back into the forgotten past. And they listened tensely to Haiden when he said:

"The religion that was worshipped and practised within this ruined enclosure is forever lost. We shall never know the prayers that they uttered; the songs of praise that they sung; nor all of the hope which they held forth—, they, the Priests of this Temple of Mysteries—, but we do know that the basis of their belief was faith, hope and charity. Faith and charity in this world and hope for a better life in the world to come. Even your guide books will tell you that Cicero, who was one of its followers, declared that this great religion taught: 'Not only to live happily but to die with a fair hope.''

"But who was their god? How did they personify their deity?" asked Ward.

"Really, in a mother's love is the religion founded," answered Haiden, "for it was Demeter, searching for her daughter who had been taken from her by evil influences, who, according to the Cult, was the founder of the belief. Later on you shall see her statue in the Museum—, just a plain statue of a beautiful faced woman, whose features, filled with a mother's love, glorify the sculptured marble."

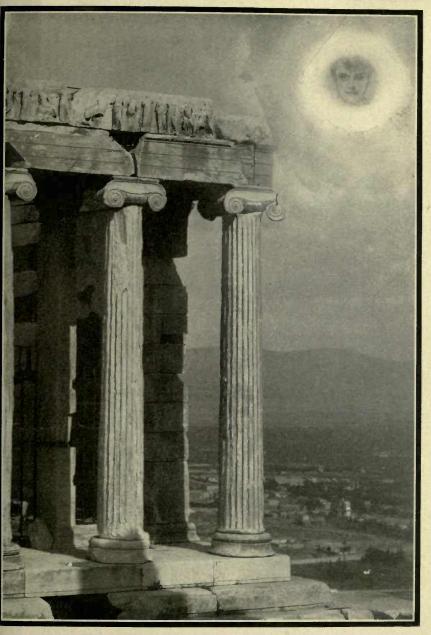
"How beautiful," exclaimed Athena as she repeated the words: "A religion founded on a mother's love."

"Yes," returned Haiden, "and the great success of the Christian religion came from its making one of its first precepts the dignity and respect of womanhood."

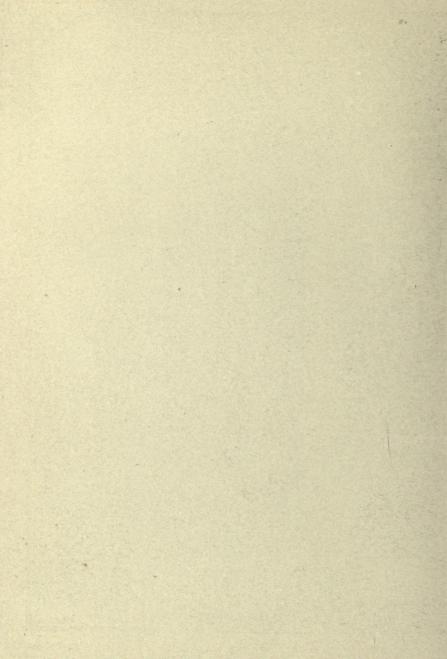
In the surroundings the thought impressed itself deeply upon them.

A little lamb stood looking dubiously about bleating for its mother. As Haiden held out his hand it came up and ceased its bleating.

There was no laughter excited by the incident, even when Haiden reached over and patted the woolly head. The moment was filled with seriousness for them all, standing in the midst of ruins which represented a religion which



Her face in his fancy shone down upon him from the sapphire sky above



had given its uplift to the world long before Christianity had even been conceived.

The wind from the dappled sea breathed toward them from the grey rocks to the brown and russet shores of Salamis.

The gleam of broken marble, the shadowed outline of the ruins of noble buildings, the pavements worn smooth by worshippers of two thousand years ago, the circle of the deep blue sea with the mountain ridges beyond; all this held them as they listened to the song of birds coming from the hillside eypress and the groves of citron and olive.

They were back in Athens for luncheon, and after the siesta again started out, first visiting the monument of Lysikrates.

"Just think of it," exclaimed Haiden, as he pointed at the beautiful memorial. "This is a monument to a man who would be entirely forgotten had it not been erected in his honor. His and even his father's name was perpetuated through all history by reason of the fact that the son was choragus or music leader when a certain boy chorus won a prize.

"Listen," he exclaimed, lifting his finger. "Do you hear any music?"

They silently listened, but to their ears there only came the harsh clank of a passing soldier's sabre, making discord with the coarse, rough cry of a street vender.

"I do not hear those discordant sounds when I look at that monument," continued Haiden. "But I hear a composition made up from all the sweetest music treasured in my memory. And I picture out Letrotes, the son of Lyseithedias, his face radiant with emotion, leading on the final refrain of that boy chorus song which still lives on, although by no memory retained and by no voice recalled."

As he spoke, his own face took on a faraway expression and his voice became low and musical. Athena was deeply affected, and when he turned to lead them away, her eyes sought his and she felt that she understood him as she had never before understood any other man, save her father.

XII A GLANCE BACKWARD

O'Rourke had hardly said a word during the previous day of sightseeing. He seemed to be in a reverie and in the silence which followed Haiden's remarks, clasped his hands behind him and paced backward and forward for a few steps, looking about like a painter, who, having given the first strokes to his picture, pauses to contemplate the landscape before he continues.

But when they finally made their way to the Acropolis for the first time during the four days they had been together, Athena found herself alone with O'Rourke by a casual and unintentional separation from the party, which, had it been by the slightest design on either side would have made them feel very uncomfortable.

They had been left standing by the Temple of Athena Nike, each hardly conscious of the presence of the other or of the departure of the rest of the party, so intent were they on the wonderful view spread out before them.

Athena was reading from her guidebook Byron's verse:

"Descending fast the mountain shadow's kiss Thy glorious gulf, unconquer'd Salamis!"

and the words came to her lips half aloud, causing O'Rourke absent mindedly to step out from the shadow where he was standing, so that he came beside her, saying:

"Yes, Byron's description is wonderful. The first time I ever visited the Acropolis I sat down right on that marble step and wept like a child. I have often tried to write something about what I have seen in Greece, and although sometimes I have staid up all night working, as I thought, under an inspiration, after I had finished I would tear the sheets up because they seemed so inadequate."

"I am just beginning to feel this thrill of Greece myself," said she. "I never knew that there could be anything so glorious on earth. Why, that sea yonder looks just like one great blazing sapphire and the heavens are set as with gigantic precious stones."

"It's a novel simile you are using," he remarked with-

out looking at her, and then added:

"Athena, the Temple of Athena Nike—, the Temple of the Winged Athena, the most beautiful temple in the world, in one of the most beautiful situations of the whole planet. By the way," he continued, "your parents must have had considerable interest in Greek mythology to name you Athena."

"How did you know that was my name? I rarely use it and generally prefer to be called by the good American name of Sally."

"Oh, because of your father's comradeship with my father, I have known of you for many years."

"Yes, and I remember you, I remember you but vaguely, oh, so vaguely, when you came back from West Point on a vacation. They made quite a lion of you."

He did not seem to heed her remark and finally said:

"What a wonderful fellow Haiden is."

"Yes, he is indeed of great benefit to us in explaining everything."

"More than that, he is good hero-material, ready made and fashioned into my own mind which only needs the mechanical dip of the pen to turn into good stuff. It is rare to find so much emotional depth in a man. Who is he?"

"I only know that he comes vouched for by the Duchess, who, because of his intimate knowledge of Greece asked to have him of the party. That great fellow whom they nickname Magnus and who rarely says anything, is a personal friend of Count Coste and it was in that way that he was invited."

From beneath them, in the auditorium of the theater, clanked back the echo of a church bell, the only sound about them save the click of a stone cutter's hammer engaged in a work of restoration.

O'Rourke turned and watched the flakes of marble chip-

ping out from the tools of the workmen as they stoically labored on the opposite side of the stairway, and then said:

"It seems wonderful to me that this whole cliff top was adorned by these wonderful monuments, all commenced and finished within the short space of ten years and in that single decade a few men's brains fashioned out of marble blocks an influence which will live on forever. I think it is well that Haiden reserved the Acropolis for the last, for to me there is nothing like it in the whole world.

"You who have seen everything, know," she acquiesced, looking up at him.

He averted her gaze, saying:

"No one has ever seen everything and few of us see all of anything that we look at, for we generally only take a single angle and are satisfied with that. It really takes several people together a long time, to even get a part of an understanding of a single one of these remarkable monuments. I fear," he continued in a different tone that came to her somewhat sadly, "I fear that I have been living too much alone. The Hermit's life isn't conducive to seeing things as they should be seen."

She dropped her handkerchief and he leaned dangerously near the precipitous edge, picking the perfumed linen up gracfully and without any thought of the dizzying depth below. He returned it to her without a word, folded his arms and then was lost in reverie as he gazed on the indigo colored water of Salamis.

Silently they both stood and looked, the light gauze of her veil floating upward against his broad shoulders.

"I—, I—," and then he hesitated, abruptly saying, "Shall we not rejoin the party?"

"That is not what you intended first to say, was it?" she ingenuously asked.

"No, frankly, it wasn't."

"What was it then?"

"Oh, I was merely going to express the pleasure in making your acquaintance and in thanking you and your father for being invited to your most interesting party."

She smiled and responded graciously:

"And we thank you, too."

He looked at her earnestly for a moment and then declared:

"Oh, I did not mean to make it just a mere formal compliment. I really wanted to tell you that I look upon your father as being my life-long benefactor. He does not know that I know it, for he has tried to conceal his benefactions to me."

"He told me," said Athena, "that he had helped you get your appointment at West Point."

"Helped me? Why, he, himself, appointed me when he was Congressman and his benefactions towards me commenced long before that."

She looked at him inquiringly and he continued:

"You see, at the outbreak of the Civil War, my father, who was the editor of the town newspaper, enlisted a regiment of infantry and was made its Colonel, and by the end of the war, for bravery, was made a major general. Well, you know what it must have been in those days to come back with that rank after such gallant service. If he had been well and strong there would have been a different story to tell; but, as it was, a rifle wound, not at first considered dangerous, developed complications that made him a paralytic, not totally so, but so serious as to unfit him for any sort of labor."

He paused during his narration and then continued:

"He died when I was an infant. I was the only child." He sighed, and then said:

"It seems strange, doesn't it, that my father should have performed such splendid service for those long four years and then remain a mere shell of a man ever after. As often as he set himself at some labor, just as often he failed to accomplish anything. Of course the government gave him a pension, insufficient, however, for his manner of living, but from some mysterious source, which I now know was your father's benefaction, he was always supplied with money. After his death the pension came to my mother through a

special act of Congress passed by the influence of your father, and to enumerate all that he did for us would be a long story. Well, then he got me the appointment at West Point, and on graduation I went into the engineers. I think you know the rest of the story which I told for your benefit at the hotel when I first met you, for I knew that your father knew all about me."

He turned and lightly replaced the veil about her neck,

saying:

"But the benefactions did not cease there. After I had resigned and found myself in Paris, down and out and almost penniless, a great American newspaper sent a representative to me who put me on its payroll at a salary larger than I had ever received as pay in the Army, and then I knew again that it was your father's influence that was helping me along, and why? Why did he do it? Just because of the comradeship he bore my father."

"It sounds very much like father's way of doing things,"

remarked Athena.

"But please do not tell him anything about this confidence," he urged. "I think that he will be better pleased if he still believes that I know nothing about it."

She looked at him for a moment and then responded

slowly:

"I have never had any confidence apart from my father." Then she added musingly:

"But I do not think that there will be any harm in this—this reservation."

He slightly bowed his acknowledgment of the tacit promise, and offered her his arm to step down out of the temple.

Together they passed silently up under the marble columns of the gateway, each thinking of the other, and with a new born friendship bringing—or at all events seeming to bring—them nearer and nearer together.

XIII COSTE'S AWAKENING

It was their last day at Athens, a day beginning full of joy for Coste, for he seemed to discover in Athena's attitude towards him just enough cordiality to lead him to believe that in time he could make her love him.

He hummed a little operatic air to himself as he took his cold rubdown and went through a few setting up exercises. Then he arranged his toilet with more than usual care as he admitted to himself, rather foolishly:

"Yes, I can make her love me and she will make me ever happy as my Queen."

He did not fear the rivalry of Haiden. Haiden was too much of a dreamer to win a woman's heart, and although Coste had been frequently twitched with jealousy, he would not let himself believe that Athena ever had any serious consideration of him as a suitor for her hand.

As for O'Rourke, he had really not considered him at all, for he seemed to have in his make-up the elements of a polite woman hater, and it was only on the single occasion when he had lingered behind with Athena on the Acropolis that he had ever manifested any interest in her whatsoever.

So Coste felt almost satisfied that there would be clear sailing for him right up to the very port of matrimony with the beautiful American heiress, with whom he had become completely infatuated as never before with woman. He felt that were he already King, he would marry her even though she were the poorest of his subjects.

He stepped out on the balcony projecting from the window of his room. He felt so buoyant that his tenor burst out into a quick, vibrating, pulsating song which in his happy frame he could not restrain.

The song brought to the balcony and to the window next to his the huge form of Magnus, still in dressing gown and holding in his fingers his phantom cigarette. He frigidly responded to Costc's effusive greeting by a chilly nod. But his indifference did not at all disturb the rosy confidence of Coste. To him all the world was now bright and happy in hope, and Magnus was one of the instruments of his well being. So he still lingered and sung on the balcony, although in a lower voice, looking over into the parkway, even after Magnus, with something of a scowl on his face, went back into his room.

"I haven't been paying enough attention to the old chesty of late," he reflected. "Undoubtedly he feels hurt because I have seemingly neglected him in my devotion to the beautiful American. I'll make it a point of taking him around at luncheon with me to some restaurant apart from the others to-day, so that I can jolly him up and smooth him down a little. I am on to his game all right now. . . . He wants to make me King so that he can control the new industrial franchises and mining rights under my authority as King. He is undoubtedly representing some syndicate which is advancing him money for that purpose, but if the old chap doesn't behave himself he may find out the sort of a fellow he has to deal with when I am King."

Magnus gloomily accepted Coste's invitation to lunch, Coste reflecting that it would be the first time they had really been alone together since the day when he had delivered his soul into Magnus' keeping.

Coste asked to be driven to a restaurant which he had noticed on the Rue de Stade, and through whose lace curtains there had appeared to be something of quiet and retirement.

But as they entered, he saw that at that luncheon hour it was well filled, with waiters hurrying back and forth and a concourse of guests continually coming and going.

"It is—, rather noisy here," remarked Coste, "and I do not know if we will be able to get a table alone."

"Oh, that's all right," testily urged Magnus in the tone of a hungry man. "Let's sit anywhere," and giving his hat and stick to an attendant, he carefully folded his immaculate gloves into his pocket, and led the way to a corner table already occupied by a very perfect type of an ancient Athenian, both in features and bearing.

"If we sit here," cautioned Coste, "better speak German, as that chap looks like a French-speaking Greek."

Magnus gave a look, and answering in French said:

"What difference does that make? We have no secrets to disclose."

Coste felt hurt. Why should Magnus be so grouchy toward him? In the irritation which he felt, he entirely forgot to thank the young man by even nodding an acknowledgment for his relinquishing of the table so that he might try to enjoy it alone with Magnus.

"What are you going to eat?" asked Coste, in an injured

tone, handing over the bill-of-fare.

"Oh, just some Persian Pilleau. I like to sharpen it up with paprika, and thus I put a goulash edge on the hash mutton which takes me right back to Budapest," returned Magnus, half goodnaturedly, after drinking the aperitif which Coste had ordered.

The meal progressed in silence, for Coste could not find a way of broaching the subject of the Kingdom of Albania, and in his nervous waiting for an opening, he drank two and then three half bottles of Mavrodaphne wine until the natural buoyancy of his nature was lost in its heaviness.

"I suppose," he tentatively commenced, "that in Albania there may be difficulty in obtaining good servants."

Magnus gave a vague shake of the head as he plucked open a fresh almond.

"Our plans of Albania seem to be progressing very nicely, do they not?" again ventured Coste.

Magnus seemed to be too much engaged with his dessert to even hear as Coste continued.

"I fear that the Epirotes, unless they have some concessions made to them, will make considerable trouble in Albania, for I understand that they are already sending up new field pieces and planting batteries in strategic points. Now, I, for one," he added reflectively, looking at Magnus, whose head was bent over his plate, "I, for one, believe that it would be a good plan, right now while we are here in Athens to conciliate the Epirotes and take them fully into our confidence."

"What!" ejaculated Magnus, as if he had been awakened

from sound sleep, "What is this you are saying?"

"I was saying," returned Coste, "or rather, I was going to say, that I believe that the Epirotes have a just cause for complaint, and that they are too formidable to be overlooked, that we ought to take them into our confidence."

"What! Our confidence?" asked Magnus, dwelling long

upon the possessive.
"Yes," responded Coste. "That they may assist us in completing our program and bringing it to fulfillment."

Magnus laid his two hands before him, clinching up the tablecloth in his fingers.

"What program?" he asked.

"Why, the program-, your program-to make me King of Albania," he blurted.

Magnus gave another clinch at the tablecloth which set some of the dishes rattling on the table.

"You fool!" he shot out between his teeth and bristling mustache. "You wild fool! Do you think that I would ever go into a venture with a madcapped gambler like you?" and with these words he arose, thrust aside his unfinished dessert, angrily seized his hat and stick, and strode out of the cafe, purple with rage.

XIV REVENGE

Coste felt his heart crystallizing all its feeling into hate as he watched Magnus going out of the cafe. . . . Oh! the utter heartlessness of it all—the treachery—the deceit! Every generous thought within him withered up as his fiery blood boiled in the recollection of the insult. Was ever man so deceived and duped?

He rapped loudly on a glass for the waiter, and paid the bill with a muttered curse. Then he sat for a long time, his face every moment becoming more pale and determined. Yes. He would be revenged, and revenged to the fullest. . . . But how?

With this thought in his mind, he vehemently threw his chair backwards and turned as he found it knocking against that of the one at the table behind him.

"Pardon," he said mechanically, and drew his chair in.

"There is no wherefore," responded a clear young voice, in French, and, in an inviting cheerful tone that caused Coste to look backward and recognize the obliging stranger who had given up the table.

Coste for a moment forgot his anger as he looked into the frank countenance of the Greek.

"This restaurant is so popularly frequented that the chairs are placed rather too closely together," continued the stranger.

"Yes," returned Coste, "but the luncheon has been well

prepared and well served."

"We lack many things in Athens to make strangers comfortable. Our cuisine is rather good, for the Greeks have taken lessons for centuries from the Turks, whose cooking is always wholesome and has of late years been rather improved upon by the French methods, which many of our chefs have learned in Paris itself. You see, Athens is really not so far away from the rest of Europe, except it only seems so because we are even not yet connected by railways with other parts of the continent."

Coste found himself becoming very interested in what the stranger was saying, but his blood was still frenzily mounting at the insult of Magnus, although he helped himself from a dish of Turkish delight which the young man passed him, and politely listened as he went on.

"This is a pastry confection which is purely Turkish, and if you will allow me, I will order a mastiqua to go with it."

Coste acquiesced and in a few moments the two were talking together with all confidence.

"Are you living here?" asked the stranger.

"No. I am here on just-well, what I might call a pleas-

ure jaunt, with some friends,—and you?" he asked in polite return of the interest.

"I really am an American. I am an Epirote American. I came back to serve during the Balkan war. I was Captain of infantry and was in all the important campaigns without getting even a scratch."

"And now?"

"O, now I have resigned, and I am merely staying for awhile in Athens. I think that it will be some time before I return to America, although I really have not much personal object in remaining here."

"The Epirotes were very disappointed in being made a part of Albania, were they not?"

"Ah, yes," sighed the stranger. "Unbearably so, for we were made a part of an impossible political combination which differs from us from almost every point of view."

"Do you know anything about who may be proposed King of Albania?" asked Coste, with an attempt to disguise his interest and with another sinking of the heart as he thought of Magnus.

"No, but whoever is King will have to be acceptable to the Epirotes, and grant them certain privileges; otherwise Epirus will be ever in a continuous state of revolt, for the Epirotes are thoroughly resolved not to be put under Mussulman or Catholic influence."

Coste reflected as he rolled a cigarette and lighted it.

Here was a chance for his revenge. Magnus had really tricked him and he hated him as he never had hated before. Here was evidently, by some excellent good fortune, an opportunity offered through this new acquaintance which he could turn, perhaps, to good advantage, identifying himself with the Epirote movement and thus thwarting, in every way possible, Magnus' ambitions.

He thought while the Epirote talked on and then suddenly resolved to discontinue the cruise, as the party continued on the round of the Ægean Islands and remain in Athens to perfect his plans. He felt that Magnus had suddenly become his enemy. He resolved to checkmate any and all of

his purposes. It would be a long time before the party got back to Venice and not till then would Magnus have an opportunity to betray his foolish contract for the payment of the gambling debts.

But how could he abandon the party? What excuse could he give to his mother—his sister—and above all, how could he extricate himself from the clutches of Magnus?

A plan suddenly presented itself to him. He would see some physician and have him certify that his old wound had developed complications which required him to go to a hospital. Then after the party had left, he would be perfectly free to fully mature his program of revenge.

"And the Epirote movement—is it carried on rather seeretly?" he asked, after the plan flashed through his mind.

"No," answered the other, "because Epirus is contiguous territory to Greece, and the Greek attitude toward Epirus is a very open secret. Every Greek sympathizes with the Epirotes. It is quite amusing," he added, sipping his thick Turkish coffee, "a friend of mine, a major of cavalry, resigned his commission in the Greek army to join the Epirotes. So the commanding Greek general here in Athens sent two other officers over to Epirus to seek him out and try to induce him to return. But after the two officers, looking for the truant, had found him, he so enthused them with his patriotic purpose that they, instead of inducing him to return, resigned from the Greek army themselves, so that the commanding general, rather than run the risk of losing any more officers, had to accept all three resignations."

"Is there anything like the French foreign legion in the Epirote movement?" asked Coste. "That is to say, would they give a command, say for a few months, to an officer of another nation?"

"Why not?" returned the other. "Why not? It is a patriotic movement, and if the foreign officer is willing to serve on the small pay allotted him, and had the proper credentials, I shouldn't wonder but that a place would be found for him, particularly in artillery. Do you know of any one who wishes to join the movement?"

Coste hesitated, and the stranger, seeming to divine the reason for his hesitation, took from a case a card, on which appeared the name:

CAPITAINE TOLBI (LA VINY)
d' Infanterie
Athenes

"I am very glad to have your card and sorry that I have not one to give you in return, but if it is convenient for you to call at the Hotel Grand, I will indeed be pleased to know you further," acknowledged Coste.

Some acquaintances, fellow officers of Tolbi, passing by in brilliant uniforms and clanking side arms, stopped at the table. All were introduced, and Coste soon found himself much at home with his new-found acquaintances.

Finally Tolbi with his companions left, but Coste still remained, deeply plunged in reflection as he puffed away at a strong cigar.

"Yes," thought he. "I have found a way to avenge myself on Magnus to prevent him further using my name and honor. He shall no longer own my soul. Yes. I will be revenged. It will not be he who shall enter into the appointment of the King of Albania. Miss American Dollars shall never be duped as a Queen." Then his teeth ground with a curse and he struck his hand down on the table with an unmeasured force that made the dishes rattle.

XV COSTE DROPS OUT

Coste found it easier than he had anticipated to remain behind while the others went on an extended cruise of the Cyclades Islands. At first the Duchess and Cornelia wished to remain behind to attend him in the hospital where Coste had caused himself to be carried, but upon his urgent insistence, they finally consented to go on and then take him back to Italy with them when they returned to Athens.

No sooner had they left than Coste immediately convalesced from his imaginary relapse in such wise that the next morning he was in a retired room of a certain Greek hotel, earnestly engaged in consultation with Tolbi and other Epirote officers, and that very afternoon set out with them for Epirus.

To Coste there was something glamorous about the adventure. He hated the Turks and anyone who was a Mussulman he considered as a Turk. It almost seemed to him that he was doing a service to his own country, in using up part of the time of his sick leave in aiding the Epirotes. The fact that the Epirotes were opposing likewise a large Catholic contingent, did not at all weigh in the balance against the Epirotes.

He was surprised to find how large was the Epirote military organization that had already been effected, but the artillery service to which he had been assigned was compelled to remain idle because the field pieces and the ammunition of the mountain batteries had not yet been received.

"Guns for Epirus! Yes. Guns for Epirus! That is all we are waiting for now," remarked Tolbi, "and once we have them, then you will see how our flying front goes forward; when they come, then your revenge will commence."

"My revenge?" asked Coste. "My revenge? What do you mean?"

"I have often wanted to confess to you," came back Tolbi, "that the reason why we were so eager to get you in our service was because we all know that fellow Magnus who tricked you. You see, we have a rather good secret service established among the Epirotes and when Magnus, as they all call him, came down into Albania the last time, just before he joined your cruise, it was decided that he was a menace to the Epirote movement. You see, Albania is a

very retired country, and strangers are shadowed very easily."

"What is the game that Magnus is playing?" asked Coste.
"Oh, he wants to control the development of the country so that he can steal its public franchises. At least that is the only reason we can surmise for his intrigue. If he ever comes back here again, he will meet with a warm reception, for he is interfering altogether too much in our Epirote affairs"

"Then the reason why you have taken me in your confidence is because of my estrangement from Magnus?" asked Coste.

"Exactly. I overheard your entire conversation in French at the restaurant, which confirmed the previous information I had had of both of you. The wonderful thing about Albania is that nearly every one who goes in or comes out of it must proceed by steamer, for there are, as you know, no railways, and hence it is very easy to establish the identity of our visitors. Knowing Magnus, we wondered all the time what part you were being made to play."

"I was foolish," returned Coste, "to even think for a moment that Magnus would help me, and if it hadn't been for my wild conceit in believing that American dollars would go as a dowry with the throne, I would never have been misled. Oh," he added dolefully, "what a preposterous ass I have been. Why, I can hardly believe that I could have been so presumptious as to aspire to the hand of that wonderful woman."

"Ah!" exclaimed Tolbi in a polite suggestion for Coste to continue.

"Yes, it is a dreadful confession to make, but I am sure that I can tell you in confidence, Tolbi, in view of the intimacy that has sprung up between us in our soldier life. I actually thought that Magnus intended to marry me to the daughter of Ward, the American millionaire, and then put us as King and Queen on the throne."

A sympathetic smile curving on to the lips of Tolbi encouraged Coste to continue.

"Oh, I never would have believed it had not he actually squared my gambling debts for me, amounting in all to one hundred fifty thousand lire. Now, he would never have done that had he not had an actual interest in me."

"But you rendered him some service, did you not?" asked

Tolbi.

"Oh, no. Nothing to speak of. He merely asked me to get invitations for him and Haiden on the American's cruise."

"How much actual cash money did he give you?" asked Tolbi.

"In actual cash I received twenty thousand lire. The rest he paid out for my gambling debts."

"How do you know he did?" asked Tolbi suspiciously.

"Well, because he told me so."

Tolbi tried to suppress a laugh.

"I doubt if you will ever find that he has paid any of it. He is as crooked as a ram's horn from the report we have of him."

"What?" asked Coste, in a despairing voice. "Do you think that I will still have to face those debts in Venice?"

"I don't want to say so, but it seems to me that all the money that he has paid or ever will pay on your account is the twenty thousand lire which, considering the fact that both he and his companion are having an expensive tour on a princely yacht, is a pretty cheap passage money. But," he added as he saw Coste's crestfallen and dejected air, "don't feel bad about not getting the kingship, for whoever is appointed King of Albania will have thorns in his crown and the crown won't last long even at that."

"But what is the scheme of this rascal Magnus? Who does he propose to try to put in power?"

"Why, haven't you already divined it?"

Coste shook his head negatively.

"Why, it is the Prince of Reisberg."

"The Prince of Reisberg," exclaimed Coste.

"Yes, the Prince of Reisburg, who is traveling incognito under the name of Haiden."

"Haiden!" gasped Coste. "And will he be King?" and a jealous clutch gathered in his throat as he thought of Athena. "Will he be King, do you think?"

"Never!" returned Tolbi. "Never! At least not as long as there are guns for Epirus."

XVI AN ÆGEAN CRUISE

Even to the Duchess and Cornelia, who at first felt lonely without the Count, the cruise was wonderful, carrying them, as it did, from one fair dream isle to another, over a sea hung with the golden veil of Grecian mythology and painted bright with historic pictures whose vivid colors are fadeless.

Magnus became quite a different personality, and developed a charm and amiability of manners that greatly attracted the lady members of the party, and before they had got down as far as the island of Melos, he was the great moving factor which controlled and directed the conduct of all about him.

O'Rourke continued to avoid Athena, so that Haiden had her much to himself, and if, perchance, Athena did devote any time to O'Rourke, Magnus was always there to tell some of his stories and monopolize the conversation, O'Rourke appearing quite content to have nothing to say.

Even Ward came under the seducive influence of Magnus, who daily by a series of clever questionings, laid the old man's soul bare dissected before him.

The office of matchmaker even in a man like Magnus was hard under the circumstances. In the first place, Ward had to be very carefully sounded as to whether he would consider a son-in-law of princely blood and royal aspirations—, secondly, Magnus had to determine whether such a person would be acceptable to Athena, and thirdly, he had to bring about that continual propinquity of association which he hoped would engender the emotion called love.

"Do you know," began Magnus one day, alone with the Duchess, "I did not believe when I came on this trip that I would become a witness to such a beautiful love affair, as has crept up between Haiden and Miss Ward?"

"Love affair?" asked the Duchess, slightly raising her eyebrows, for even with the polite intimacy born in the continual association with Magnus on the yacht, her delicate noble breeding resented the abruptness of his tone and remark on such a fragile subject as love with a direct indication of the parties involved.

He shrank from her abjectly; then murmured something about being misunderstood.

Whenever the Duchess showed the slightest irritation towards any one, her whole nature, immediately thereafter, reacted in a display of the greatest kindliness. Of this amiable peculiarity Magnus was quick to take his advantage.

"You have a very wonderful son," he said soothingly. "As you know, we are very dear friends. Count Coste has a brilliant mind. I have wanted, and may perhaps be able, to do something to gratify his well justified ambition."

The eyes of the Duchess softened with a mother's love. She leaned her head slightly toward Magnus, who, after taking a few whiffs at his phantom cigarette, continued:

"Yes. Your son would make a brilliant military commander; not only of a company or a regiment, but of a whole army."

A smile played around the lips of the Duchess. She tilted her chin in acknowledgment of the compliment.

"Are you prepared for and will you permit a great confidence?" asked Magnus in a low tone, leaning toward her.

"Any confidence which concerns the future of my son will interest me," she returned.

"Well, then," continued Magnus, in a still lower voice, "Haiden, our companion on this cruise, is the Prince of Reisberg, and will be made King of Albania."

The Duchess gave a start. "The Prince of Reisburg?"

"Yes," repeated Magnus sententiously. "The Prince of Reisberg will become, at no distant date, the King of Albania, and if my plans go through, your son will become his Minister of War."

A glad, bewildered look came into the face of the Duchess. "I thank you for your interest in my son," she remarked warmly, and then meditated, "the Prince is of the Hapsburgs, and is of the stuff that Kings are made of. I always suspected that he was of most noble lineage."

"Now, I still further want to continue my confidence," said Magnus, "by telling you that I am satisfied that the Prince is so desperately in love with Miss Ward that unless his love for her is reciprocated his life, for the time being, may be ruined, and he will be unfit to assume the duties of his Kingship."

The Duchess inclined herself toward Magnus sympathetic-

ally, for every tale of love is plausible to a woman.

"Now," continued Magnus, "you can do a great favor to me, and place the Prince under obligations to you as well as Miss Ward, while at the same time establishing your son handsomely for life, if you will only help me overcome any scruples which both Mr. Ward and his daughter have against marrying nobility."

"In what way can I assist you?" asked the Duchess, now

intensely interested.

"Well," responded Magnus slowly and ponderously, "at dinner to-night I am going to announce the fact that our cicerone and companion, Haiden, is none other than the Prince of Reisberg. This will probably mean that the old man and his daughter will not consider favorably the suit for her affection, which thus far has been progressing successfully."

"They would indeed make a splendid royal pair," commented the Duchess, in whom both the instinct of matchmaking and devotion to royalty were strong.

"Yes, you can contribute to their happiness," continued Magnus, "and do Albania a great good by helping the match along."

"I am willing," she responded calmly and thinking with a mother's love, of the benefit which would accrue to her son. "Well, it is only a simple matter. All you have to do is to suggest at any appropriate time to the father, that his daughter's happiness depends upon her marrying the Prince, and at the same time give the daughter to understand that it is her father's wish that she marry the Prince. I will see to the rest."

"But is this actually the state of affairs?" asked the Duchess with her keen sense of honor.

"Yes," responded Magnus convincingly. "I am sure—, I am absolutely certain—, that the lives of both of these young people will be forever ruined sentimentally if they do not marry."

The Duchess reflected. . . . She resented somewhat the influence that she saw Magnus was getting over her, but she really knew little about men and hence had little fear of their control over her. Magnus himself was a nobleman and had occupied the highest position of diplomatic service and in an Imperial Ministry. But still as she reflected, she vacillated and for a long moment looked off over the depth of blue sea framed on the horizon by the shining edges of the mountains.

"Is this, is this, perfectly honorable?"

"Not only honorable," said Magnus solemnly, "but I believe it to be a duty—, a duty of honor, from a noble woman to a noble man."

"Then-, then-, I will do it," declared the Duchess.

But tears came to her eyes as she turned and then abruptly left.

XVII TRIALISM

Coste did not doubt but that Magnus would be able to carry out his plan to name the King of Albania. The suggestion on the part of Tolbi that Magnus had deceived him as to paying up the gambling debts did not make him any the less certain that Magnus was a person of great political strength and power.

But as he thought the matter over he became more and more convinced that Tolbi was right in saying that the gambling debts had not been paid and in the face of substantial suspicion of such condition, he was resolved on one thing: that he would never return to Venice until he had the money to pay them, for without their liquidation his life would be forever unhappy and miserable. But where else could he hide himself, except in that particular position where he then found himself as an officer of the Epirotes, and where could he have a more honorable occupation during the period when he was waiting for things to clear up? . . . His fellow officers were a gallant, courageous lot, and had all taken a great liking to him. He had been up to Argyrocastro, the capital seat of the Epirote revolutionary government, and was well and favorably acquainted with the main movers of the uprising.

He still reflected that he loved Athena—loved her more than his own life-loved her enough to even sacrifice his own word of honor, something that no one in his family had done during the nine hundred years of their unbroken peerage. It was for Athena and for his mother and sister that he wanted to avoid disgrace—that terrible disgrace and dishonor which, if it could not be entirely avoided, could only be veiled by death itself. Again and again he condemned himself for having been led into the folly of believing that Magnus intended to make him King of Albania. But why not? he argued contradictorily. There was no family in Europe whose influence was greater nor whose blood was purer, and Magnus, himself, had once told him that the blood of kings and emperors ran in his veins. Yes, Magnus could have crowned him King had he wished; but he had not so wished. . . . Why? Perhaps because he, Coste, was an Italian. Magnus, as an Austrian, representing Austrian interests, would, as he reflected, never have dreamt of allowing an Italian to occupy the Albanian throne, for Austria was already jealous of the Italian colonists' immigration to Albania and looked upon it with suspicion.

"Yes," he finally reflected. "I have been ridiculously foolish. The madness of gaming and of love have upset my judgment. Magnus believed and still believes that Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir apparent to the Austrian-Hungarian Imperial crown, will live to carry out his dream of "trialism," in reconstituting the Empire out of three instead of two populations, adding the Slav to the German and Magyar—, a dream which may be eventually realized by the crushing force of the Imperial power bringing all the Slavs of the Balkans into a unit with those already under the control of Austria."

In this light the whole conduct of Magnus became clearer to Coste's mind, as he talked the matter over with Tolbi and his other fellow Epirote officers. Magnus was playing a political game for some unscrupulous syndicate with which to loot Albania of her first franchise gifts and privileges.

"Yes," thought Coste, as he came to this conclusion. "Yes. That is his plan, and it must be checkmated; it must be frustrated. But how?"

Freely and without reserve he told the head officers of the Epirote administration all that he knew about Magnus and the chief of them brought the first comfort to Coste when he declared:

"Whoever is appointed King of Albania will have to answer for his conduct before the leveled rifles of the Epirotes. If Magnus believes that he has found a way of uniting the Moslems of Valona with the Catholic element and the Greek Christians of Epirus, he will find that it will not be by the arbitrary appointment of a royal personage by the sextuple group of powers. There is only one way to bring peace to Albania, and that is by granting the Epirotes their practical autonomy."

"If Magnus really represents the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, we will be ready to wrap the knuckles of Austria also. For we will seek the welfare of Epirus to our death."

The final words impressed and encouraged Coste. With Italian impulsiveness he declared:

"Yes. For the welfare of Epirus, and I will be with you even to death."

And then he fell to cursing Magnus and he cursed him hellishly; but had Coste really known what most inspired Magnus to seek the Albanian throne for the Prince of Reisberg, perhaps there might have been just a whit less of violence in his final denunciation of Magnus as "a creature without a single human emotion for good."

XVIII MOUNTAIN ARTILLERY

Coste, with his long military training, had gained the entire confidence and esteem of the provisional Epirote government, and when the guns finally came, he was assigned in command of a battery.

To one who had had the actual experiences in warfare as had he, the chances of ever making use of the single gun which was allotted to him as the first assignment to his battery seemed rather remote, for after he had placed it in the position overlooking a defile of the mountain, and in a wilderness all by itself, he was inclined to doubt the mental soundness of his superiors who had directed the planting of cannon in that particular place, since it was in an entirely uninhabited position and, as it seemed to him, distant from any points of possible attack.

But it was a new cannon, one of the splendid German field pieces which he had always preferred to the heavier French and English pattern, and he busied himself in disciplining and training his men and in making preparations for battle just as if there were an immediate and imminent attack expected from the Moslems.

There was one thing, however, that Coste failed to do. Belonging, as he had theretofore, to the perfected Italian military organization, in the mountain isolation of his Epirote command it did not, of course, occur to him that he would have to do his own reconnoitering. So he never knew, nor did any of his command know, that just across

the deep valley before him and down towards the road which led to Greek territory, another gun was being planted. Not a gun for Epirus; but a gun against it, and a gun of a longer range and of heavier fashion and manufacture. No, Coste knew nothing about the danger, so secretly had the opposing gun been put in its position. . . . Day after day, although its burnished muzzle gaped out at him through its concealed mounting in the rocks, and the field glasses of the enemy took in every detail of his position, he was entirely unaware of it. Both opposing batteries, however, were harmless to each other, for neither had ammunition with which to dare the betrayal of their presence, and the enemy's advantage was thus for the time being of no avail.

In his irksome moments of idleness, Coste's mind often went back to the cruising party. He wondered what they were all doing. He had left a letter at Athens for his mother on her return, telling her that he would himself come back to Venice via the Dalmatian coast. He was happy in the thought that the party would not go to Previsa to return to the yacht, but that their plans would make them sail from Patras directly over to Brindisi, from where his mother and sister would proceed home by rail.

As for his own plans, . . . why, they were those of all soldiers; plans that never went any farther than the muzzle of their guns, but plans that the slightest incident might turn into the quick approach of death.

Late that afternoon Coste had gone up on the hillside behind his battery of a single gun and with the aid of his field glasses was surveying and sketching the surrounding country. A sudden gleam half way down on the opposite mountain caught his eye. He watched it and saw that the gleam moved along about as fast as a man walks, and then suddenly, in a break in the rocks, he saw that it came from a carbine held close to the side of a uniformed man—uniformed in the fustinella skirt and Moslem fezs. And then as he still looked, he saw other soldiers working about something that he felt must be a field piece.

A thrill of excitement shot through him as he rushed down

to his own battery. There was no telephone communication. All messages had to be carried by couriers, but he hastily scribbled out a letter to headquarters, recounting the details of what he had seen and asking for information and orders.

The couriers had not been gone long before two of his own men came in bringing a peasant captive, and it was from this peasant that Coste heard that the Moslems had planted their guns opposite his, even prior to his own coming, in order to control the defile, but they were unable to use it on account of lack of ammunition.

"When will their ammunition arrive?" asked Coste to an interpreter.

"It is hourly expected," he responded.

Coste knew that there was only one way by which it could come, for there was only one road in all the region about and that was controlled by his own cannon.

Anxiously he awaited the return of the courier, giving him authority from his superiors to take the cannon by assault in case the peasant's information was correct. A light supply of shells reached him and he longed for night to come so that under its cover he might reconnoiter and when fully informed act accordingly.

As he thus reflected, a cloud of dust appeared way off at the final perspective of the single road. Through his glasses he descried two auto cars approaching, the first that he had seen since he had placed his battery there. He felt satisfied that they could not belong to the Epirotes, and suddenly convinced himself that they were bringing the ammunition for the battery of the enemy opposite.

Yes, there was now no longer time to wait. He must act quickly and upon his own initiative, for the Moslem battery must be immediately destroyed before the ammunition had been supplied to it.

XIX A MISTAKE AND A GUN

Coste's first shot belched the valley full of thunder; but there was no answering fire from the enemy. He retook his range and again fired, and the smash of the shell immediately above the masked battery brought from him a ery of joy.

Suddenly he saw the battery pulled out from its position and changed so quickly that before he could again fire it was again concealed behind the rocks.

He ordered the company of infantry attached to his battery to prepare for the charge, and crawling upon their bellies down the side of the mountain, they took their alignment in extended order, awaiting his further command.

Suddenly the whirr and spit of a rifle volley spattered around him, followed by its echoing detonation, . . . then when the auto cars were down directly at the entrance of the defile, he saw a shell plow up the road before them,— a shell that came from the enemy's gun; then he knew that the auto cars were not of the enemy, for at the first shot the two cars stopped under the shelter. . . . Watching with his field glasses, as he gave the command to prepare to fire, he saw the occupants of the cars excitedly piling out, and with a single glance through the lens, hardly daring to believe his eyes, he saw that the autos contained Ward's whole cruising party and that his mother, his sister and Athena were being hurried behind the shelter of the rocks by Ward, Haiden and Magnus.

He felt dazed as if suddenly waking from a vivid dream. Then another shell exploded upon the rocks, behind which the party had concealed themselves. Even then he could hardly realize it possible, that those he held dearest in life were exposed to those terrible instruments of death. . . . For a moment his mind could not react upon a single one of all the details of the awful happening. Then the turbu-

lence of his thought broke like a wave rippling outward, leaving his mind calm and unruffled.

Yes. He understood now. The enemy had believed that the auto cars were bringing ammunition to him as he himself had believed that they were bringing it to the enemy.

It was hard for him to get the new range. Already he had wasted half a dozen of his precious shots without getting a single one in reply. Evidently the enemy believed that the autos were more important than a cannon or perhaps they were again still without ammunition.

Suddenly he saw the whole world grow red in a terrible crash and everything bent over and fell before him, leaving him standing alone in the empty dizzying space. He commenced to float through the air, it seemed, still with his field glasses to his eyes, looking down upon the terrified faces of his mother, his sister and Athena, who were crying to him for help. Then he felt the wet outpour of his own blood and all grew dark before him.

XX THE FIGURE IN GREY

When the enemy did respond to Coste's battery, with deadly accuracy it planted a shrapnel directly above it, and the rain of bullets from the bursting shell sent to the ground in a bloody heap, half of the whole battery. Among them was Coste.

Had it not been for the infantry still safely lying beneath the shelter of the rocks, all would have retreated and abandoned the position, so suddenly had the deadly work demoralized all.

Winding up from the road beneath, a grey-clad figure came, whose form at times was almost lost in the grey of the rocks. By springs and bounds it came up the hill, until finally a voice rang out, clear and resolute, calm and undisturbed:

"Qui parla Italiano?" and then after a pause:

"Who speaks English? Sono il suo amico. I am your friend—an American."

A head popped up from behind a rock from which gleamed the line of a rifle and responded in English:

"I speak English."

"Then come quickly," responded the grey figure. "Lead me to your officer."

The volunteer wriggled upward to where the grey figure calmly stood waiting and together they crouched low as they went to the mass of dead and wounded behind the ordnance.

"Ah. He is dead—our Captain,—the other officers also," exclaimed the volunteer, as he pointed down to the pile of hodies.

The grey figure snapped off his coat, and reaching down, quickly but tenderly disengaged the blood stained uniform from a dead officer who laid before him, and then buckling on the side arm, cried out:

"Then call to them all and tell them to remain as they are until I command them. Interpret in Greek as I go along," he continued. "Put these men in shelter," pointing towards the dead and wounded. "Tell the gunners to come on. I, myself, will load," and in a moment his sinewy brown hands had slipped the shining cartridge into place and with a quick adjustment of the range finder, the shot burst out.

Little by little what was left of the battery was settled around the new commander in a marvelous working order born in the desperation of the moment and the stocky figure behind the gun planted shell after shell with deadly accuracy upon the battery opposite.

Finally a line of fustinellas was seen running towards the autos and dropping down concealed behind stones, fired volleys towards where the party was still concealed behind the rocks.

"Shrapnel now!" yelled the new commander. "Shrapnel! We must take the gun by assault or they will murder those

women with their rifle fire. Tell them, 'shrapnel,'—to load and aim as I lead the advance. Fire high so that we will be always safe.'

He thrust off the bloody coat of uniform and, rolling up his sleeves, pulled the sabre from its scabbard.

"Every time I look back and yell, shrapnel for them—shrapnel. Tell them that,—and you come with me to give my orders," he cried to the interpreter.

At the head of the platoon he pressed forward to advance—and then to cover, running forward and then dropping, yard by yard nearer, down through the valley—upon the other side—always nearer.

A volley crashed out before them, but it was too high. It did not stop a single man. Another volley and a man dropped. Another volley and two more dropped, but still on and upward, with that grey figure always ahead of them with waving sabre, turning now and then to becken onward.

And then down behind the rocks again, waiting for that final desperate plunge forward. . . .

"Ready, men! Now with the bayonets! Go right through them!" And as they followed close behind he knew that his own action was guiding them on.

Another volley crashed; then in a twinkling the grey figure had led them right up to the guns, and was scattering all before him with lightning-like blows from the sabre, his arms and face splashed with blood, his mouth open in a wild frenzy as he still waved his sabre, beckoning them—urging them—until, with one final desperate mad lead, like a magnet he drew the gasping men after him and the battery was his.

Then, leaning on his sabre and striving to regain his breath, he held one hand up to his bleeding head and forced the words:

"Send the men down to save the women—, bring them to me! Bring them to me, that I may know that they are safe."

They rushed down the hill to do his bidding, and when the women were brought, with Haiden, Magnus and Ward, Athena gave a cry of terror, and rushing forward, put her arms about the blood stained figure, whose face was streaked and splashed with red.

"Oh, father!" she cried. "He is dying! He is dying, and he saved us."

There was a thrill in the old man's voice as he, too, came forward to support O'Rourke, saying:

"Just like his father-just like his father."

XXI COUP D'ETAT

Magnus had a perfect genius for political intrigue and had he not also had genius for the invention of great schemes of evil he would have proven to be one of the master minds, not only of his own country, but helpful perhaps in a large measure to the peace and harmony of all Europe.

It was this genius for the invention of evil, or, let us call it, this political mischief-making propensity, which had cast him out from the high councils of the Imperial Cabinet and left him as a sort of a political ghost to haunt the thresholds of those high in power.

Thus he had become a sort of a back stairs, court intriguant, whose ambition had descended and found its disquieting level as a franchise bunk promoter and, in the instance of this story, a matrimonial speculator for a fourth-rate throne.

But there was one thing about Magnus which had always made him admired among men. He was consistent even in his inconsistency. When he put his hand to the plow he would follow on until the mule dropped, even though he went in zigzags.

Then there was a core of courage in Magnus—the courage of the cracksmen who bores, drills, and hammers away for hours through adamant steel, not knowing whether the treasure may or may not be found within.

Ordinarily a man who knew that conditions were, politically, as disturbed as they were in Albania would have given up all hope of evolving out of European diplomatic frumpery and treaty—puppet playing, such an elaborate scheme as that of nominating a King for Albania even after he had discovered and found for him a rich wife.

For anyone else to propose such a thing except Magnus, even to the susceptible boot lickers about the court of Vienna, would have appeared sheer madness, but Magnus had actually succeeded with his plausible arguments in obtaining almost sufficient preliminary funds from those who had axes to grind, for the accomplishment of his ridiculous plan.

And Magnus had so long nourished those plans that he, himself, commenced to believe in their eventual realization; plans which, as you will see, were not entirely inspired by sordid motives.

Haiden was not his accomplice as would be supposed. In fact, it was not even in a remote way that Haiden, in his lack of conceit, could have conceived the possibility of kingly honors being thrust upon him. Haiden was made of different stuff. But to Magnus it still seemed as though everything had been going along smoothly to work out success for his plans, until that eventful day when the party had concluded to motor over from the Greek frontier to Previsa to rejoin the yacht there rather than double back to Patras.

The artillery duel, however, for the time being, had thwarted Magnus' plan, which would have otherwise, he believed, progressed successfully under the match-making assistance of the Duchess.

Coste had not been killed, but was in a precariously wounded condition, as well as O'Rourke. So after the Epirote reinforcements had finally rescued the cruising party and delivered it from danger, they were all taken to the yacht at Previsa, where, upon a suggestion from Magnus, they proceeded to Abazzia.

Magnus was made of that peculiarly heavy timber which,

although straight grained without, is crooked in its heart to the point of a knotty hardness. Then he was also obdurately unyielding, and as the yacht proceeded on to Abazzia, he firmly decided to put the matrimonial coup through after all, at all hazards and at all costs, as soon as Athena and the Duchess recovered sufficiently from their nervous shock to again be susceptible to his influence.

Shifting his phantom cigarette from one side to the other of his thin lips, as he whifted at the menthol, he eudgelled his brain to finally bring about a better play for the accomplishment of his plans.

A storm blew so heavily between Bussi and Lissa that they took shelter in the town of Camisa, from whose almost perpendicular and scanty fields the sardine fishers eked out their scanty fare. The ribbed mountains, bellying downward and mottled with scant shrubs, stood out barren in bald and ashen heights, all of which did not make a very agreeable picture to Magnus in his intense desire to get to Abazzia.

At length his eyes were gladdened when, after a two days' wait, they left behind them Bussi with its humble roofs agleam in the rising sun and were soon approaching Fuma, where the sea about was dotted with feluccas, their sails as brilliant as Joseph's coat of many colors, the huge pointed canvases holding up the bouncing hulks like a hawk carrying its prey.

Magnus looked at them idly. A felucca passed near them, crowded with a black line of peasant passengers. He gave a little nervous gesture with his hands—, yes, nervous, for even iron-nerved Magnus was at length becoming nervous under the strain of his mischief-making, and the admission that he was nearing the home land with none of his plans accomplished.

He walked forward to the skipper's bridge while the yacht was slowed down to take on board the inspection officers, and approaching the first who appeared, asked for the Daily Journal, which stuck out of the officer's pocket.

At the very first sight of the headlines, Magnus' face

paled, and, half staggering, he fell limply into the chair nearest him, the paper still clutched in his hands, his eyes greedily devouring the lines which dizzied him, although he still read on—read on for some moments, oblivious of what was going on about. Then casting the paper aside angrily, he arose and stood looking out upon the water, his hands clinching each other violently behind his back.

Then he shifted his phantom cigarette deeper in his mouth, and a wicked smile of resignation came over his face—the grey, sickly smile of the gambler who has lost his last vestige of honor and credit in a final desperate play.

For he had read of the terrible happenings of the last few days during their journey up from Patras and their isolation at Camisa, and he knew that the Archduke Ferdinand had been assassinated and that all Europe was about to plunge headlong into the greatest war the world had ever known—a war whose schemes were so gigantic as to pop open like a tiny bubble—the petty little ambitions which he had framed up for himself and for Albania.

BOOK TWO

I MAGNUS PLANS AGAIN

Although Magnus was almost convinced that the game was up as far as the throne of Albania was concerned, there was still enough of the unreasonable gambler's doggedness left in him to make him believe that in some way luck would turn. Yes, would turn if he could only hold on to his quarry, for he was not a man to be disturbed by any casual interferences in his plans as long as there was still daylight left to follow them through.

Although the appointment of Prince William of Weid might have been regarded by any other save Magnus as a direct frustration of his own plan, he, himself, with his far-sightedness, passed it by as a mere trifling episode, a mere provisional appointment which, when it was finally terminated, would add just so much the more to the success of his own appointee's administration, for he looked upon the appointment of the King of Albania something in the way that certain Latin-American diplomats look upon the election of the President of a Latin-American Republic—, a passing but powerful authority, in the short duration of whose scope a great harvest of graft could be realized.

But he was too familiar with conditions in Europe not to know that the conflagration which had been started by the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, was not the cause, but a mere episode in the casus belli, and would burst out all over the whole planet in a devouring fury, such as the world had never before known. The Powers upon whose aid he had counted for the appointment of the King of Albania were now at war with one another, and the syndicate

with which he had a secretive yet positive agreement to bond the franchises of that country, once that he had secured them, was now panic stricken, scattered out in the different money centers of the warring powers, while he, himself, became practically penniless, by reason of the fact that what little still remained of his once large fortune was invested in securities, unproductive and unsaleable by reason of the war.

He congratulated himself that his previous plan had not gone to the actual extreme of having Haiden propose to Athena. And that he had let none other save the Duchess know of his plan, for had even Haiden have surmised it, he would have been in a pretty mess. He was pleased to think that thus far he had done nothing to cause Ward to lose confidence in him, and since another way would present itself by which he could profit by the rich American's great fortune, it was only a question, it seemed to him, of staying with Ward and drifting on with the tide of friendship until time would give him his other chance.

He thought of interesting the American in the Red Cross movement, but finally considered that this would bring them into a new circle of acquaintance which might foil his plans. Whatever he did do with the old man he knew must be accomplished from the angle of American patriotism. O'Rourke would be of great assistance to him had he dared take him into his confidence, and he deplored the fact that the American author and soldier was of such honorable grain as to not even permit the shadow of a suggestion that he might be eventually won over as a co-conspirator.

Both Coste and O'Rourke were rapidly convalescing under the careful nursing and scientific treatment of the Abazzia infirmary. Magnus had plenty of time to perfect his plans, but the evil inspiration of the conspiracy day after day kept itself hidden from him. The fiction part of his brain seemed to have entirely stopped like a run-down clock and he felt his whole mind dull and laggard.

"Perhaps," thought he, "a little change of environment for a short while won't do me any harm."

So leaving them all at Abazzia, he took the express for Vienna, the noise of the train as it rattled to him in the stuffy sleeping compartment echoing into his ear as from the receiver of a telephone: "The American. The rich American. How can I profit by his fortune?"

And in his dreams, he dreamt still of Albania and when in the vision of his sleep he saw the crown placed upon the curling locks and high white brow of Haiden, a smile set itself upon his features, a sweet smile—so tender that in a moment it vanished, as though like a bird of happiness it had suddenly found itself where it did not belong and so had quickly flown away.

II GOING TO WAR

Even Magnus, with his scheming, cunning mind, overlooked the fact that Haiden, unaware of Magnus' conspiracy, might still spoil it by acting independently of him during his absence in Vienna,—an absence which he did not think would last more than a couple of days. He did not take into account the deep rooted passion of love which had electrified and thrilled the whole dreamy and emotional character of the Prince, nor its possible consequences to Athena, for Haiden was a man whom almost any woman would love under the conditions of such intimate association, entirely independent of the glamour of his family lineage and high individual place in the almanac of Gotha.

For the first day or two after their arrival at Abazzia Haiden sent a stream of telegrams to Berlin in order to find out when it would be possible for him to take his command. The answer came back commanding him to wait where he was. This he took to mean that he would be assigned to some Austrian regiment on the eastern front.

There is nothing that brings out the emotion in a woman's heart or joins the issue of love more quickly than going to

war. And now that Athena found that Haiden alone, of all the party, was to go out into a conflict which offered so much of danger to life, limb and health, she felt a new strange feeling toward him.

"Why should he go?" she reflected. "He, the dreamer, the happy poet, whose whole being rebels against the slightest act of war's savagery. He who seems to belong to some Arcadian bower—a bower of laurel and roses—giving quiet joy to all who find him out."

Even her father condoled the fact that Haiden had to go, although a gleam came into the old man's eyes when the former said to him in a matter-of-fact tone:

"Why, going to war is just like going to the polls to vote, except, instead of merely marking a ballot, one votes with all his strength, mental and physical, and with armed accessories, in sustaining what the majority of his nation have declared to be right."

"Have you any idea," asked Athena, "how long it will be before you receive your orders?"

"No," responded the Prince. "It may be a few moments and it may not be for days, but I feel quite confident that I will be assigned to an Austrian regiment, because otherwise they would have let me go right on to Berlin. You see, I speak Russian and have taken part in the field maneuvers on the Russian frontier, and since the war office knows about everyone of its officers as much as the officers do themselves, it may be that on that account they find they can use me better on the east front than on the west."

Athena's heart sank within her and tears came to her eyes so that, to conceal her emotion, she hurriedly arose and left the portico where they were all seated, and with a word of excuse, walked down the garden pathway.

Ward and O'Rourke (it was O'Rourke's first leave from the hospital) were engaged in a discussion as to the effect the European war would have on business in America and did not notice that Haiden had left them to follow up the path after Athena.

Haiden saw her wiping her eyes as she stood by an out-

look in the garden wall, gazing down over the tree-embowered house tops which terraced down to the gleaming blue sea beyond.

Her cheeks flushed as he approached, and a light movement of her body gave him the suggestion that she was going to flee. . . . But his voice reassured her as he, without glancing at her, said:

"How blue the sea is! Oh! This Adriatic! How wonderful it is!"

He put a foot on the ledge of the wall, and resting one arm on his knee, looked over towards the purple-tinted mountains beyond the edge of the water.

"You see, we Germans love the Southland, but our nation was born too late to get even just a little corner of the great beautiful Southern seas. We are choked into the very center of Europe and hedged around by England's bristling men-of-war, who declare that we shall go no farther; that we must live and die in the narrow confines of the land that our fathers knew, while all the time our increasing population is filling up into the uttermost limits of our united Germany, and spreading out over the whole world, since there is not enough room for it in our own beloved land."

She was silent. She dared say nothing.

"No, Germany is the land of peace—but the land of peace had to prepare itself for war. We just wanted a chance to go out into the world, as men well equipped for the labor—not as mere Germans, but as men—, men who would treat Jew, Gentile, Pagan and Christian all with the same fairness. But England has for years declared that she, as the mistress of the sea, will not let us go to the furthermost parts of the world that our continually increasing population may find bread to eat. But we shall see. Yes, we shall see."

He sighed as he stood upright and folded his arms, his cap resting lightly on the back of his head, blown about with a circlet of curls that the breeze lifted lightly from his high forehead, over a face almost feminine in its sweetness. But nothing in his tenderness belied the strength of his agile and muscular body.

"But I should not talk to you this way," he exclaimed, turning toward her. "You are of a neutral nation although of a nation which is more German than it is English in spirit, even though your language and a small part of your laws are related to England. I should not talk this way to you. It is not right that I should inflict upon you my own political ideas."

"But why should there be war?" she questioned.

"Because men have hearts to feel and brains to think," he returned. "When men shall cease to love home and disregard the welfare of their women and children, then they will cease to have recourse to the great tribunal of war to decide the question of their right."

A shocked expression came to her face.

"I--, I--, thought that you were so different-so different," she murmured.

"I suppose it does appear brutal for me to talk this way."

"Not brutal," she corrected. "But, oh, I don't know, your mind seems to be so beautiful, so tender, that I cannot conceive that you want to shed blood."

He thought for a moment and then said:

"Shed blood? There is nothing more abhorrent to me than to shed blood. So I am glad that my war service is come at a time when the actual knowledge of taking a human life is generally quite impossible."

She looked at him inquiringly.

"Yes," he continued. "Within the next few weeks there will probably be thousands and thousands of French, English and Russians who will have been killed or wounded by our German soldiers; and then there will be likewise thousands and thousands of our Austrian and German soldiers who will be killed and wounded by the English, French and Russians, and yet all of them will never have seen the enemy in action.

"How is that so?"

"Simply because going to war nowadays is like going into a great machine shop filled with dangerous machines, or approaching a great fly wheel, going so fast that it is liable at any moment to fly to pieces. Modern artillery points its guns high up, fires over the treetops, and miles away, after the shell has passed over the entrenched men of a whole army, it will kill and main hundreds of the enemy."

Athena shuddered.

"How can such an awful thing have any nation's sanction?"

"It does seem outrageous," he returned, "this machine killing of men on such a tremendous scale."

He reflected a moment and then continued:

"Really, the only civilized thing about so-called civilized warfare is the attempt made to protect women and children. That's the reason why war is so quickly forgotten; for a country is soon repeopled."

"Yes," responded Athena sadly. "Yes, the women are spared, but oh! how dreadful the taking away of the men and always the very flower of the country!"

"But men are willing to go. Yes, even glad to give up their lives."

She remained for a long time silent and then asked abruptly, her face coming a little nearer towards him in its appeal.

"Must you go? Really, must you go?"

Her eyes looked full into his and his breath came quicker as her glance filled with meaning; the tone of her voice so sympathetic that he almost felt like kneeling to kiss her hand and declare his love, for she seemed too wonderful—too sublime in her womanhood—to be aught less than an object of idolatrous adoration.

Then suddenly he heard the voice of Ward and O'Rourke talking earnestly together, coming toward them up the pathway. In the sublimity of the final moment, he forgot to answer her, his heart joyous and filled only with the thought:

"Perhaps if I am saved from the war there may yet be hope to win her."

III TO WIN HONORS

From that hour on, Haiden's restlessness became almost a frenzy—, a frenzy to be gone. He wanted to be away; to go to war; to fight bravely; to win honors—, and then to return that he might seek out the woman he loved.

His temperament was too delicate to admit of his presuming further on the slight suggestion of interest that Athena had shown him. He was all of a soldier now and the lover part of him had to be subdued. Late that night he walked up and down the flowered walk overlooking the sea, saying within himself:

"Yes, I am ready. God grant that the war may be short, and that my share of the battle shall be large, that I may return to her honored with triumphs, that I may be worthy to offer her my hand."

He reflected on Magnus—Magnus, merely a well accredited stranger—who had sought him out in rather a strange but conventional way, inviting him to go on the cruise. He could hardly give himself an account of what Magnus really was and what he represented. He had, from the first moment, been too infatuated with Athena to even think of any one else.

He tried to explain to himself Coste's reason for joining the Epirotes and marveled at the initiative and bravery of O'Rourke on that adventurous day. He had had no chance to talk to either Coste or O'Rourke since that bloody affair in the mountains, except for a few words of sympathetic greeting when he had called from time to time to see them at the hospital.

He felt that the adventure had put him at a great disadvantage, in Athena's opinion, for she would have never known the resolve which had permanently been fixed in his heart, naturally and instinctively; to protect her and

the other women of the party from all possible harm in those fearful moments of the Mussulmans' mistaken attack.

Comparing himself with O'Rourke, he confessed his comparative lack of initiative and marvelled at the super-man, whose mind immediately evolved such a wonderful solution of the predicament. Yes, he, himself, was after all only a machine soldier, in whose education the resourcefulness of O'Rourke was lacking. The more he reflected on O'Rourke, the more wonderful he found him.

With reflections such as these, he remembered that he had no time to lose in taking his farewell of the two men. At the first opportunity in the morning he called at the hospital.

O'Rourke, whose convalescence had proceeded almost to the point of entire recovery, received him cordially, and the two men talked on general subjects together, O'Rourke's strength freely permitting him to take a walk on the balcony with Haiden.

Then they both returned to visit Coste, while his wounds were being dressed.

Coste's nerves were shattered; he was all ashen, all unstrung. At the first information that Magnus had gone to Vienna a sigh of relief escaped him and then, with a curse, before he knew it, he had blurted out, to the surprise of O'Rourke and Haiden:

"I am glad the crook is gone. I hate the very air he breathes."

"What!" exclaimed Haiden.

The single interjected word came to Coste's disordered nerves like a short burning fuse set to a bomb.

"Yes. That man has made my life a misery. He hasn't the soul of a crocodile. He is merciless in his trickery. He has deceived me, and he has deceived you," he cried, pointing his finger impetuously toward Haiden. "And he will even deceive our American friend here if the chance allows."

Both looked at him aghast.

"Ah," continued Coste. "Is it not enough that I tell

you that the man is a villian; that he possessed himself of my very soul and now has foully betrayed me? And you," he cried, pointing toward Haiden. "You, a German Prince, are worse in his grip than I, for no sooner will you find yourself in any power to which he exalts you than you will feel the heartless thrust of his torture."

Haiden gave him an inquiring look, and then asked calmly:

"Well, what have I to do with all this?"

"Answer me first, who is Magnus?" answered Coste, impetuously raising himself from the couch until he winced with the pain which the new position brought to his wounds. "Tell me," he cried in a tone fiercer because of the pain. "Tell me, who is this stranger? This mysterious comer and goer, whose shadow brings death to all joy and which has left its blight upon my life forever? Who is he, I repeat? Why should everyone whisper when they speak his name? And even then only speak of him by the pseudonym of Magnus?"

"You startle me," responded the Prince. "I accepted his invitation because it came from your family of whom we all know. As for Magnus, I know that he is a member of a great Austrian family and has held high official positions. The invitation to join your party came to me direct in my own Chateau. I accepted it as from the Duchess, not from him."

Coste looked at him appealingly.

"I cannot tell you more," he said. "We have been and still are friends. Will you let me advise you?"

His tone was so vehement and so pathetic as to bring the conviction of friendship to Haiden. Coste saw the sympathy in Haiden's face and then again entreated.

"Not only in the light of a friend, but, if you will so take it, as the representative of our good American host, will you not let me advise you to get rid of this fellow forever if you treasure your own happiness?"

Haiden looked at O'Rourke inquiringly.

O'Rourke had never liked Magnus-, for he, with his

candid nature, never liked any one who was mysterious on close acquaintance.

"Of course," said O'Rourke dryly, "he is not here to defend himself."

"Yes, that is just it," broke in Coste. "That is why I have the courage to tell you, for Magnus has broken my honor, and a broken man can never defend himself. But you, sir," he continued, turning his white face and deep shining eyes up toward O'Rourke, "upon my word as a man who was once noble in spirit as well as in name; you, who proved your braveness, and who know that I, myself, am not a coward, be advised by me also, for the protection of your American friends, and do not let this monster make you his tool as he has me."

"Can you believe that we would condemn a man upon mere insinuation?"

Coste deliberated. Then tears of distress suddenly filled his eyes.

"Oh! I cannot I cannot," he cried. "It is too horrible even to think of, let alone to repeat."

Both Haiden and O'Rourke were deeply moved by his tone and manner. The three were silent as, at a sign from Coste, a nurse approached and then left upon some errand for him. When she was gone there was a long silence, finally broken by Coste, who said in a low, contrite tone:

"You are right. You cannot condemn him without facts."

He moved lightly on his couch and then burst out:

"Magnus made me a part of his conspiracy to marry the Prince to Miss Ward in order that, with her fortune, he might buy the throne of Albania."

O'Rourke looked at the Prince, who stood for a moment transfixed, and then slowly clenched his fists as if to dispute the statement as if he would strike a blow."

"It is a lie! It is a lie!" cried the Prince. "I would never stoop to such an intrigue against that noble lady."

"And then," added O'Rourke, "it seems that Colonel Ward is able to take care of his daughter in such affairs."

"Oh, there it is!" exclaimed Coste, wearily moving his head from side to side. "I knew that you would not believe me. No. You will never believe what an imposter this man is until you, yourselves, and your American friends are both as miserable as I. But see, here is proof, and if you do not believe it, you have only to telephone to Venice to verify the correctness of this letter," and fumbling with his one well hand at the orderly satchel under his pillow, he produced the letter in Italian, which Haiden took and read:

"My dear Count-

"In answer to thy inquiry concerning the debts which Magnus was supposed to have paid, I regret to inform thee that they are still outstanding and have, by endorsement, been put into the hands of usurers. I have seen several of our discreet friends to ascertain if it were not possible to withdraw these notes since those to whom thou first gavest them, having endorsed them, will be liable for the interest, to the great increase of the debts in case the notes are not immediately withdrawn. But I have had no success. It was certainly a scurvy trick of Magnus, but his promise being merely oral, of course he will deny it if the services thou wast to have rendered have already been given. I have always suspected Magnus, not alone because I do not have any particular love for Austrians, but because he is one of the very leaders of that hateful type who has taken what we will one day get back-l'Italia Irredenta.

"Get well quickly, Caro Mio, that thy friend may try to help thee solve thy trouble and free thyself from this snare.
"Thine affectionately.

"Salvatore di Loma."

"Now," cried Coste, the words running up to a climax, "if you question any further the infamy of this Magnus' type, let me tell you that I, being distressed by my gambling debts, sold my very soul to Magnus to relieve myself of dishonor, only to find that when he had me in his power he obligated me to become a conspirator against my own host."

Both O'Rourke and Haiden reflected. It was clear to both that Coste was telling the truth. As men of the world, they knew that his story bore the earmarks of fact; even in its details it was to them convincing.

"The scoundrel!" muttered the Prince. "I must find some means to see that he goes no farther with his conspiracies."

"But how?" asked Coste.

Haiden folded his arms and strode over to the window overlooking the sea. Then he came back to O'Rourke and Coste, saying impetuously:

"I have it. He can be easily disposed of. I am sure that my influence is more than his. I will take care that he does not rejoin our American friends."

But the Prince did not realize how quickly counter influences may move in times of war.

WEEDING THE FLOWER

After leaving Coste, O'Rourke and the Prince strolled together down the cement pathway, O'Rourke, American fashion, with his hands in his pockets, relaxing himself in a loose, shuffling, easy walk; Haiden, tall and erect, stepping out from his hips in that elegant but stiff, heavy muscular step which only naturally comes from long practice of the *Parade Marsch*.

"How contemptible of that fellow Magnus," said the Prince. "I had already suspected that he was trying to make me a cat's-paw. In fact, as I now look back, I can remember many strange things he said which verify my opinions that Coste is absolutely truthful."

"It is a pity," remarked O'Rourke, "that any advantage should be taken of such splendid American generosity as Mr. Ward offered him; but what is to be done about it?"

"Magnus must be gotten rid of," returned the Prince.

"That is the only way to dispose of anything disagreeable; just simply get away from it by getting rid of it. I believe it would be my duty to prevent his ever returning to harass our American friends again."

The Prince offered O'Rourke a cigarette. O'Rourke waved it aside with a "Thank you," digging into his pocket for a black cigar at which he chewed without lighting it. Haiden gave a quick kick with his toe at a weed growing in the gravel, crushing it against the coping of the walk.

"That ugly weed in a few days would have choked out all the chance this little bud has to bloom," he remarked as he stooped over and weeded the grass from around the struggling plant. "Yes," he continued reflectively as he rose up. "Magnus is the weed and I am sure that his influence will be bad upon the flower, Miss Ward, if he is ever allowed to rejoin her and her father. He must by all means be made to leave them alone hereafter."

"But how will you prevent him from harassing them?" asked O'Rourke in a matter-of-fact tone.

"Oh, you see, the treaty of Germany with Austria brings Vienna pretty close to Berlin. I will merely recommend that Magnus be assigned to some affair in Berlin. That will end the matter, for before he is released from his duty, which I shall take care will not be very soon, the Wards will be gone."

"But the cruise is already ended," remarked O'Rourke. "And the party consequently disbanded. Therefore such a step as you propose will not be necessary, will it?"

"Ah, I must talk to Coste about that," returned the Prince. "I will see him this afternoon when he has had his rest."

Late that afternoon both men again were walking up the path to the hospital. The nurse came forward as they approached, and remarked:

"Oh, I am sorry that you came so late," and then she was silent as the Duchess and Cornelia came towards them, their eves filled with tears.

"Oh!" exclaimed the Duchess. "Why was nothing told us of his transfer. Why have they taken him away?"

"What! Is the Count gone?" asked O'Rourke.

"Yes," returned the Duchess, commencing to weep.
"Yes. It is all so strange. I cannot understand. They have borne him away, sick and wounded as he is, without telling me, his mother, anything about it."

The nurse drew the women backward gently to quiet them, and O'Rourke's inquiring gaze happened to light upon the Prince, who, under, his breath, muttered:

"Don't you understand? This is Magnus' work."

"But how?" asked O'Rourke.

"Who can tell?" asked the Prince. "Who can say whether Coste is detained as a spy or otherwise as a military prisoner?"

The lamentation of the women came to their ears.

O'Rourke said:

"One thing is certain; he is gone. Taken away most mysteriously, and it is our duty to his mother and sister to find him."

"But how?" asked the Prince.

"I do not know now, but time will show the way. What do you imagine would be the reason for Magnus' conduct towards that wounded man?"

"The simplest in the world," responded Haiden. "He did not want the Count to know that his gambling debts were not paid. He is trying to cover up one misdemeanor with another."

The Duchess came hastening down the stairway towards them, crying:

"Oh, this horrid Austria. I knew that some harm would come to us if we remained here."

"But we shall find him for you," reassured O'Rourke.

At that moment an Austrian orderly came clanking up the pathway, the rowels of his spurs still frothy with the sweat of his horse. Striding up to the Prince he saluted and delivered a message.

The Prince opened it and read. A look of joy overspread his features as he cried:

"It has come! It has come! I must go at once. My battalion meets me on the east front."

The Duchess looked at him terrified.

"What! You must leave? You, too, must go?" she queried tremulously.

"Yes," responded Haiden. "Back at once with this same orderly. But we shall find the Count for you, for Mr. O'Rourke will keep me posted and although separated we shall still act together."

"Oh, this war! This dreadful war!" exclaimed the Duchess.

"Alas that I must say farewell," exclaimed the Prince, advancing courteously and bowing deeply to the ladies. "It pains me to make it thus abrupt, but I have but little time to get ready for the Vienna express. I must hurry."

"I know," returned the Duchess. "We can not keep you, and then besides, Mr. O'Rourke and Mr. Ward are still left to advise us and perhaps my son after all has merely absented himself of his own will."

The Duchess and Cornelia stretched out their hands to the Prince, who, after the final salutation, said to O'Rourke:

"Will you not come with me that we may discuss the matter? And then you can return and perhaps immediately bring good news to the Duchess," he added reassuringly.

O'Rourke lifted his hat and walked away with Haiden, remaining with him until the train's departure. Haiden, they agreed, was to report to Berlin the disappearance of Count Coste with a recommendation for his immediate release if held as a military prisoner, and O'Rourke's heart was somewhat lighter as he turned down through the throng to go back to comfort the Duchess, and to inform Mr. Ward of the disappearance, little dreaming that at that very moment the women, because of a fake telegram received by them from Venice, were both precipitously hurrying to catch the ship then about to sail for home, without having time even to wait for the return of the Colonel and Athena, who had gone on to spend the day at Divaca.

O'Rourke strode up the broad street and after he had gone some paces into the path which led to the villa,

heard the rattle of sabres and the rush of feet behind him. Then suddenly two heavy hands were elasped about his shoulders, and he turned to find himself in the solitude of the wooded pathway, surrounded by a group of soldiers.

"You are my prisoner!" exclaimed an officer. "Go quietly with these men to where they may lead you, and remember if you turn to the right or left you will be shot dead on the spot."

V SOME CRUMPLED LETTERS

"It is strange," remarked Athena to Magnus the following day as she sat with her father and Magnus about the dinner table after reading the letters thrown out over the table. "It is strange and I do not yet quite understand it."

"Yes," commented Ward, "but if we had eaught that fast train back from Divaca we would have probably got here in time to see them before they left. However, these letters explain the sudden departure very sufficiently. The Duchess has gone with her son and daughter back to Venice; O'Rourke has gone to the front as a war correspondent and Haiden has at last received his orders. It is all perfectly natural in this topsy-turvy war time."

Magnus eyed them and then heaved a half suppressed sigh of relief as he saw that they had innocently accepted the letters forged by him as genuine.

"It takes my mind back," added Ward reflectively, "to the exciting separations of the Civil War, when two generations of a family were broken up in a single hour."

"Yes," remarked Magnus laconically, taking a deep whiff at his phantom cigarette. "Yes, I hardly thought myself, for a time, that I would be back here from Vienna. I had a rumor of a certain order telling me to go to Berlin, and by the sheerest good luck, I actually got away before it was really served on mc. I am glad because I have a great duty to perform, a great mission, and going to Berlin would have prevented its fulfillment."

"What is your mission?" asked Ward.

"I have a philanthropic plan to provide the war refugees—, who are already actually commencing to starve—, with food. I mean the children and women who make up the most illy protected victims of war."

"Yes," commented Ward. "It was just that way in the Civil War. When men kill and fight and produce nothing, women and children and the sick and aged all have to suffer."

"I am glad that you sympathize with my plan," commended Magnus.

"What is it in detail?" asked Ward.

"Well, it is simply to buy up as much foodstuff as fast as I can before the extreme advance in prices, and commence the distribution on the Russian-Austrian front as soon as possible. It is really as great a work as that of the Red Cross. You see, this sort of relief work saves the coming generations."

"Yes, it is a grand work," remarked Athena rather cheerily although still inwardly lamenting the sudden departure of their other guests. "I wish that I could do something to help you."

"Where will you buy your foodstuffs?" asked Ward.

"That I have already calculated to a nicety," responded Magnus. "You would think that they would be brought from the Americas, would you not?"

"Yes," nodded Ward approvingly, in an American's appreciation of a reference to his country. "We have the best wheat in the world, but it is a long ways off from here, and I suppose that insurance risks would make it pretty expensive in bringing it over from there, although I would indeed like to have my country feeding the poor and needy victims of this war. It looks as if it is going to be a tremendous contest"

"Yes, it will last a long while," returned Magnus.

"America is too far away for the first needs and the relief must be immediate."

"Then where will you get your foodstuffs?" asked Ward, now thoroughly interested.

"Right at our very door," answered Magnus. "In Asia Minor; for Turkey has not entered into this struggle as yet and as a non-warring country at the present time, a very considerable amount of foodstuffs can be obtained from there."

"Well! Well!" interjected Ward. "That is, indeed, quite an idea."

"Yes," continued Magnus. "All things considered, it can be bought cheaper there than in America and besides, it is practically ready for distribution, for it can be taken up the Danube and distributed where needed. Heaven only knows the terrible suffering which the war will leave in its wake in the Balkans as well as along the whole east front."

Ward remained silent and waited complacently, expecting Magnus to ask him for a subscription to the fund.

But Magnus did nothing of the sort. He was too crafty not to realize that the psychological effect of his suggestion would do of itself its own work. So casually getting up, he remarked nonchalantly:

"Yes, anybody who has the heart, seems to be interested in my plan to relieve the suffering and I thank you also for the interest you are showing in it. And now I must be going to see some people in regard to perfecting my plans, for, of course, it will take money to finance this mission of mercy."

The three arose and strolled over to the doorway.

"Do not feel distressed because the other members of our party have left us," admonished Magnus, "for the separation would have to come sooner or later anyhow. It's always that way in war times."

"Yes," said Athena, slipping her hand through the arm of her father, her eyes taking a faraway look. She sighed, again acquieseing:

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Ah," suddenly remarked Magnus. "I have forgotten one of my gloves. No, I pray you remain here. I will go alone to get it."

In a moment he had reached the table where were the letters, one purporting to have come from O'Rourke, indicating that he was going on to Berlin, one from the Duchess, stating that she was returning to Venice, and likewise one from Count Coste, confirming the fact that he was going with his mother and sister to Venice. Magnus looked around at the two figures in the doorway. Their backs were turned towards him, . . . so he quickly and boldly crumpled the papers up into his pocket, reflecting to himself:

"Not such a bad job for an amateur forger after all, and now the corpus delicti is gone. Let the servants take the blame. Hereafter there will only be three in the party and it is I alone who will direct, but I must get them away while luck is still with me."

And a wicked, sinister smile curled on his lips as he took a whiff from his phantom cigarette.

VI THE MISSION OF MERCY

"I tell you, Sally, it is a great chance to do good. The Baron," for so Ward always, in his humorous, good-natured American tolerance of nobility and its titles, referred to Magnus, "seems to be a rather philanthropic sort of a fellow, and since I can't do any thing now for the Albanians I might as well start some relief centers for the refugees."

"I agree with you perfectly," responded Athena. "Besides, we have the yacht and we will cruise around to Asia

Minor and see Constantinople and the Golden Horn, and then I have always so wanted to see Broussa. Since the party is broken up it seems quite the reasonable thing to do."

The old man's eyes danced with delight.

"Sally, how well you read my mind!"
"And then," continued Athena quite enthused, "going

to Turkey we would get away from the war, which has already showed its dreadful effect by taking our guests

from us yesterday."

"Yes," confirmed Ward. "Getting away from the war to do good for those who are its victims—, the innocent, weak victims of war—, just as I saw them in our terrible civil contest. What a providential chance to do good!"

"And how will you manage it?" asked Athena.

"Why, I suppose that we will let the Baron manage it for us. It was his idea—his plan, you see—and I don't see how I could put it through without his assistance. No. I don't suppose," he added reflectively, "that our Minister in Constantinople or any of our consular offices could really give us much assistance."

"Should you think of starting before we heard definitely from the Duchess and her son and daughter, and from Mr.

O'Rourke and the Prince?"

She pronounced the last names almost guiltily, rebellious in her heart at the thought that O'Rourke had left with nothing but a note of formal leave taking that compared

illy with the gallant epistle of the Prince.

"Why not?" asked her father. "The war is gripping everything about here more and more and one of the war ministries might commandeer my yacht. By the way," he reflected, "that is something that I must ask the Baron about—, as to whether or not they have the right to commandeer neutral property such as my yacht. We never did in the Civil War, but that was because," he added with a smile, "we never had much of a chance. The Johnnies were so poor that the neutrals never came around."

"We are fortunate in still having the Baron left," re-

marked Athena.

"Indeed we are," returned her father. "That is, if he really is still left us, for it is already getting on towards lunch time and if he doesn't put in an appearance soon I will suspect that he, too, may have spirited himself away. Without him I would hardly know how to settle up for the expense of this villa, for it is he who made the contract for its rental."

As he spoke, the gardener, who had been working in the flower beds near the arbor where they were seated, approached Athena, offering her a bouquet of flowers.

"Strange," remarked Athena when the man had with-

drawn to the flower beds again, "how clean and white that gardener keeps his hands. Poor fellow, he has been hovering about us all this morning just to get a chance to give me those flowers. Haven't you a bill in your pocket for him?"

Ward pulled out a roll and passed a bank note to his daughter. Athena called to the gardener, who came up, . . . this time with his hands concealed beneath his cap.

"Of course he does not speak English," said Athena as

she passed him the note.

The man made a deep bow and again retiring to the flower beds immediately soiled his clean hands with the dirt, saying to himself:

"That was a close call. I wonder what the Baron would say if he knew how careless and absentminded I have been

about my hands."

After Ward and his daughter had left, the supposed gardener hurriedly and surreptitiously crept up into the secret room where Magnus was waiting, and forthwith gave him a full account of all the conversation that had passed between Athena and her father during their morning stroll through the garden.

VII THE CRUISE OF THE THREE

Magnus appeared spick, span and immaculate and took his place at the luncheon table.

"I am very sorry to tell you," he commenced, "that I

am afraid that I, too, will have to abruptly leave you."
"What!" ejaculated Ward, dismayed at the thought that his mission would not carry, while Athena also looked at him in consternation at the thought of losing the last member of their party.

"Yes, you see," explained Magnus. "This relief crusade which I have in view must be immediately attended to, for I feel that it has now become the greatest duty of my life."

"It should be the great duty of everyone who can attend

to it," commended Ward.

"Yes," continued Magnus. "But you see, I find that I have difficulty in obtaining the necessary ways and means;

that is to say, to speak almost rudely and vulgarly, I find difficulty in getting the money necessary where I thought it could be had and therefore," he added sadly, "I will now have to seek it elsewhere."

"But my father will assist you," impetuously broke in Athena. "We have both talked it over this morning and

he thoroughly approves of your plan."

"Yes," confirmed Ward. "I am prepared to finance you

in this well conceived philanthropy."

Magnus reflected, looking vacantly before him as he sank back, slowly drawing his napkin lengthwise over his knee.

"Ah," he finally said. "I had not dared to think of that. It would really be asking too much, would it not?" and he looked from one to the other in an apparently disturbed, reluctant way.

"Not at all. Not at all," answered Ward, while Athena

added:

"There is nothing that my father more dearly loves than to do good, and since America does not need his help he must find an outlet for his philanthropy in Europe."

"Let me think it over a while?" drawled Magnus. "I do not yet feel justified in putting upon you the burden of this

heavy yet glorious undertaking."

The rest of the meal was finished almost in silence, but late that afternoon Magnus sought them out in a quiet corner of the Casino garden where Athena and her father sat sipping

sorbets while listening to the concert.

Magnus seated himself, rapped for the waiter, and ordered an apertif. Athena noticed that he was, even more than usual most immaculately dressed with a fresh white waistcoat and a newly laundered panama hat whose colored ribbon gave him a jaunty look. He leaned his hands with their well manicured nails over the golden knob of his walking stick and finally declared in a deliberate tone:

"I have come to tell you that I want to start out with you on your mission of mercy—, just as soon as you are ready,

and the sooner the better."

Ward stretched out his hand in a warm clasp to Magnus

and exclaimed:

"Good! Then let us leave as soon as I can settle for the villa. My daughter, I know, must feel lonely here, now that the others have gone."

He turned to Athena and asked:

"Is it not also your desire, daughter?"
"Yes," quickly responded Athena.

A look of satisfaction settled over the face of Magnus, for he knew that at length he had them entirely in his power; but as he arose and started back towards the villa he merely said:

"Yes, I think perhaps we had better start in the morning, and we can leave word here to have any messages forwarded, if they come from the others, to Constantinople, where we should arrive within the week."

VIII THE GOLDEN HORN

Athena was lonely—lonely, although she would not confess it to herself, but there was in her heart a yearning, as though the bottom were dropping out of it with a sickening sensation which, when she ate, seemed to turn the food in her mouth to ashes.

She felt guilty in her misery, and feared lest her father in some way might penetrate the mystery of her sentimental being. She felt at times as if she wanted to avoid his gaze—he, her own father, and her beau-ideal of what a

man should be.

Her sleep became disturbed, and hollow rings appeared beneath her beautiful eyes. She tried to attribute her condition to some other cause than that of sentiment. But no, she was absolutely convinced that the only reason for her

misery was that she was lonely. But for whom?

"Ah! How foolish! How absurd!" she thought to herself one morning after they had arrived in Constantinople, as still in bed after a night of restlessness she looped her beautiful dark hair into a psyche knot upon her head, and then with her hands clasped behind her neck, looked up to the ceiling. "Yes, how foolish," she repeated, and this time half aloud. "How nonsensical for me to feel lonely when I have my dear good father with me."

Then she tried to analyze her feeling, and immediately put in practice what a fashionable mind preacher had once

taught her, saying to herself:

"Yes, some little cells in my brain are not acting right. I must switch the mental current off so that they will no

longer feel out and disturb my harmony of thought. My mind must give me its own remedy," and then she repeated over and over again to herself:

"I am not lonely. I am not lonely. My father is with me. I am happy with my father. I am happy with my

father."

But in spite of all she could do, she saw the composite picture of a man come up before her—a man who had the dark, impetuous eyes of Coste, the dreamy-faced, soulful expression of Haiden, and the rugged, handsome, courageous face of O'Rourke.

And then suddenly she made a dreadful discovery: that she was not lonely for mere society such as that of the Duchess or Cornelia—not lonely for either of the women members of the party—but lonely for the man part of it.

Her lovely face blanched at the thought, and rebelliously she struck her slim, white, shapely fingers down into the

pillows about her.

"How horrid! How awful!" she reflected, "that my

nature thus betrays my weakness."

Disturbed and even excited, she leaped out of the bed. Slipping on her dressing gown she stepped over to the win-

dow and peered through the lattice of a shutter.

The sun was already well risen, and gilding the meandering line of the Golden Horn, painted the cypress groves with a vivider green and whitened the marble domes of the Mosques and the sentinel shafts of the minarets which stood guard over them. The shining water was flecked here and there with the gleaming white of a sail. Sky, sea and shore line became a color picture intoned with the morning light.

The view soothed her for a moment and a smile lighted her face as her eyes passed over the panorama from the sea to the distant azure line of the mountains beyond.

"Ah! That is the Golden Horn!" she exclaimed. "How beautiful, how glorious it is. How can I ever think of

being miserable amid the glories of these scenes."

She went to get her opera glasses, and with them scanned the line of the Golden Horn, till finally there flashed before her, through the glasses as she moved them about, the length of a street, its latticed balconies bracketed out over the rough stone curbing, strung along with shutters taken down from the lower doorways and windows.

There was not a woman to be seen about—only men,

whose red fezes stood out fiery in the sombre width of the

melancholy street.

Then suddenly, in the direct line of her glass, she saw one of the latticed windows opened—opened with the calm assurance that those within could not be observed from the street or surrounding houses—, and there in the window appeared the form of a woman clasping a child to her breast as she tenderly kissed it.

Some dogs, snarling and quarreling over a bone in the street below for a moment diverted her attention. When she again looked the window was closed. The picture of the mother and babe had vanished, and as she again swept the streets with her glasses there was nothing but men, with their long coats or sleeveless jackets, to be seen.

Again she covered the distant outline of the Golden Horn, where its salty waters were joined by the Sweet Springs of Asia, and mechanically she repeated to herself:

"I am happy. I am happy. I cannot be lonely. I cannot

be lonely."

Then she turned, and put aside the glasses in a deliberate measured way, as though to control some emotion within her.

But finally, on a sudden impulse, she threw herself upon the bed and burying her face in the pillows, sobbed aloud. And the picture of the mother and babe still haunted her, and she realized that the babe at the mother's breast was the soul motive of the whole world.

IX "IT IS GROWING LATE"

While Magnus was busy making his contracts for the purchase of foodstuffs, Athena and her father, with a dragoman especially selected by Magnus, made the trip to Broussa, the ancient capital of the Ottoman Empire.

They left their yacht moored up the Golden Horn beyond the bridge of Galata, and took passage on a foul little steamer from which they were heartily glad to escape after the few hours' journey brought them across the sea of Marmora to Modania, the port of Broussa.

"They tell me," remarked the old man to his daughter,

after they had taken the train and were jogging along through the wonderful hills that led to the terraced valley, where Broussa, the splendid lay, "they tell me that Broussa is the most Turkish city in the world—, that ninety per cent of its inhabitants are pure Turks. Now, do you know," he confided, as he let the pages of the guide book run through his fingers, "we have been in Constantinople for a fortnight and outside those cheaply uniformed soldiers that we saw everywhere, I have never been very sure that I have seen any Turks. The guide told me that nearly all the shop keepers are Armenians."

"Yes," returned Athena. "That also has been puzzling me since I have been here. We are actually in Turkey and in the Capital of the great Turkish Empire and yet it doesn't

seem to be as Turkish as Cairo or even Algiers."

"I am surprised," remarked Ward, as he waved his hand towards the beautifully cultivated fields bursting open with the prodigality of bumper crops, "that the Baron didn't come to Turkey to find his 'irresistible land,' instead of in the mountains of Albania. What a delight it must be to farm such soil as this. And they tell me," he continued abstractedly, "that under modern farming methods there are the greatest of possibilities in the great ancient plain of Mesopotamia, which is susceptible to the simplest sort of an accessible irrigation. Then besides, the Turks have within their dominions those great cedar forests still preserved from the time of the Bible and known as the cedars of Lebanon."

After they had been in Broussa a couple of days, the quiet and calm and charm of that ancient Capital seemed to assuage Athena's troubled spirit, and it was only in spells that she still felt that distressed feeling which she described as *loneliness*.

In the cool of an afternoon, after visiting the last of the wonderful tombs, they had come up to a point in the road beyond Broussa where all its glories were spread out before them in one luminous panoramic display. The white domes of the mosques and tombs, the gleaming mellowed ivory of the minarets, the rich red glint of the tiled roofs of dwellings enframed and embowered in groves of orange, citron and olive, with here and there the steepled form of a cypress shot upward from the flower gardens beneath, long held them entranced amid the wonders of the valley

scene, contrasting so strangely with the great rough shaggy outline of the mountain beyond, whose rocky base broke out against the opalescent waters of Marmara, blending

with the blue of the heavens above.

"Three score and ten," murmured the old man to himself in a tone which caused Athena, who immediately caught the meaning, to nestle closer to him as she gathered her rounded arms about his own. "Yes," repeated the father. "Yes, three score and ten are the years that are allotted by the Bible as the end of man's travel in this world of pleasure and pain, and yet I am going on on the journey—so much further."

"Oh," expostulated Athena. "Let us not speak about

it. You must live for many, many years."

"Oh, don't distress yourself, daughter," he returned, gently patting her hand. "There is no reason why anyone should distress himself about death, for it is only the gateway to something beyond. But do you know," he continued, looking at her tenderly, "I sometimes think that it would have been better for me to have gone first, rather than your mother. For a father can never talk to a daughter as can a mother. I know that if she were here she could advise you as I will never be able to do."

Athena felt confused and her cheeks flushed. For the moment she knew not why, and then remembered that there were times when, by some strange psychological sympathy,

her father seemed to divine her very thoughts.

"You have been lonely, child, since the party was broken up—since the others left, have you not?" he tenderly asked.

Athena, looking down at the ground, made a mark on

the sand with the trim edge of her shapely shoe.

"Oh," she returned. "During the cruise there was so much excitement and movement, so much of-oh, I don't know what-and, of course, the change would affect one."

"Yes," he said reflectively. "Undoubtedly," and then

slowly added:

"It is hard for even a father to understand his daughter when there is so much difference in their ages. Do you know that yesterday when we were visiting that great Sultan's tomb it seemed to me that as far as being able to give you any advice that I might as well be boarded into the sarcophagus in his place and covered over with the cloth of embroidered gold, a turban on the top and the two giant candles on the side:" "Ah," he continued, as the tender smile still lingered on his face, "it seems sad that the relations of sex with its corresponding differences of view seem to unfit a father from even attempting to advise with his own girl child who has to look at things from the standpoint of a woman."

"I-, I-, don't understand," faltered Athena.

"And neither do I," returned her father. "Neither do I understand how I am impotent to advise you—you, whom I love above all—but the thought has been with me frequently of late that if—if, for example, I should go suddenly—, that then there will be no one else to take my place as your protector; that—, that—," he continued slowly as his clear eyes sought the line of reddening mountains beyond where the blue sea rose to catch the setting sun, "that then you might be even lonelier than you have been since the others left us. I sometimes think that I have not done my full duty towards you."

She looked up into his face reproachfully, and noticed for almost the first time in her life that the skin on his cheeks was drawn parchment-like, with wrinkles furrowed deep and long. In a flash she was seeing him under a new light—a light that was fading rapidly, and which, when

gone, would forever put darkness between them.

"Oh, father!" she exclaimed, gathering his hands up

into hers.

"I think you understand," he continued. "I think that you understand the thought that is now with me always, that I have not forecast sufficiently the time when I shall go beyond and leave you—leave you without my protection."

His voice sank lower.

"And now in the midst of these beautiful scenes, while we are all alone—all alone to make our plans—what time or place could be more appropriate for the calm deliberation upon that which eventually and perhaps sooner than we think will surely happen."

"But father!" she exclaimed. "You are so well! you

are so strong; why should you speak thus?"

Gently he disengaged his hand from hers and held it

up before him.

"See," he exclaimed. "There on my hand is a bruise. Just a bruise caused by knocking against a rock that day

in Epirus when O'Rourke saved our lives. It is just a bruise and it happened a month ago, but see, it does not heal. That means that every beat of my heart is measured."

He stood still, holding his hand up before him-a wrinkled, knotty hand upon which the knuckles and finger joints puckered up the skin in lumpy furrows.

Athena's eves filled with tears.

"What will life be to me without you!" she expostulated bitterly.

Gently he drew her to him and together they strolled down the highway, the cedars throwing their lengthening shadows deep into the vale beneath them. As the last rays of the setting sun were falling, they came to one of those strange little cemeteries which appear at every long road turning in the land of the Moslem, with its strange tombstones, surmounted with stone carved turbans or marble tops, covered with flowing lines of Arabic inscriptions, the slabs out of plumb pitching one toward the other and some entirely fallen among the growth of weeds upon which sweep the black shadows of the majestic forms of the cedars above. Beyond the roadside cemetery a huddled, whitegowned figure was going into the gateway, suggestive of a spirit passing into the other land.

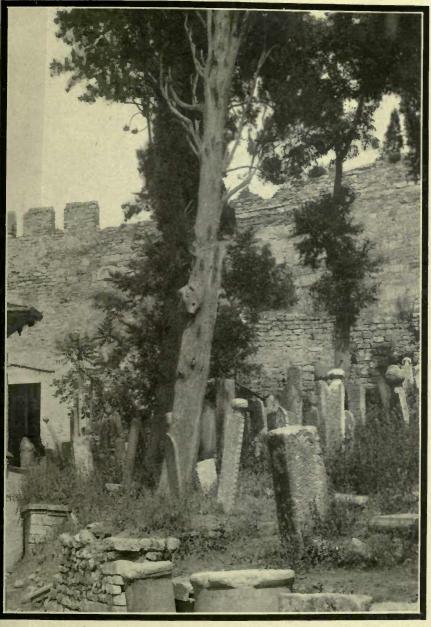
Athena shuddered. But her father, approaching the fountain nearby, sat down upon the broken edge of the wall and lightly, with his hand serving as a cup, sipped some of the water. For some time they sat in silence. Two or three lads, sandal-footed, baggy-trousered, shortjacketed and red fezed, passing, paused and looked at them curiously, and then went on down into the street into the great darkened doorway of the wall beyond where the white robed figure of the woman had passed like a

ghost.

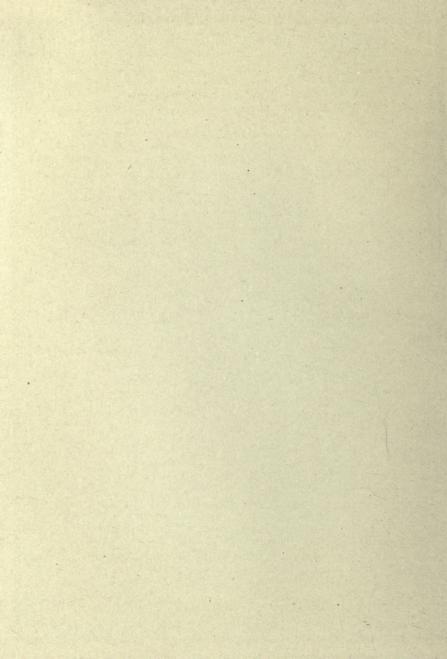
"How mournful," murmured Athena. "Come, father,

let us go. It is growing late."

"Yes" repeated the old man, rising wearily, but with a smile still playing upon his features. "Yes. It is growing late. It is growing late; the day is almost done and still my work is not finished. It is growing late, but God will still grant me the time."



"Beyond the roadside cemetery a huddled, white gowned figure was going into the gateway, suggestive of a spirit passing into the other land." (Page 130.)



X GOLDEN EAGLES BACKSHEESH

Cholera had broken out in Broussa and under the advice of their dragoman, Athena and her father made preparations to return to Constantinople. All the regular sailings across the Sea of Marmora from Modania had been quarantined except one little side wheel steamer of but a single deck and that inadequately covered against the weather by a ragged canvas. They would never have taken this craft had they known that it also was to be quarantined, and quarantined in a place where even the magic gold of backsheesh would not avail them.

After the ancient engine had thrashed away for most of the afternoon they were well in sight of the minarets of Constantinople, when with great bawling and yelling the anchor was dropped and their dragoman came to them in an excitement unusual for his Oriental equanimity.

"Alas," he cried. "These Captain eez one beeg fo-ol man. 'E 'av tol me that he go to Constantinople but he 'av fo-ol me. He come here, I think, to get backsheesh."

Then the Captain himself, calling upon Allah in all sorts of obligations, exhibited in his defense a mild-looking individual, with a dreamy face, a gesture of resignation, a frock coat and the eternal fez (quite as greasy as any other), who portentiously carried under his arm the authorization for the quarantine, and once he had delivered it to the Captain, was immediately rowed away in his small boat, not giving the slightest opportunity for a tender of backsheesh; conduct which was certainly unbecoming a Turkish officer and Oriental gentleman of quarantine. After long and violent volleys of word firing, counterfiring and parrying, speeches of blasting sounds which even out-howled the howling dervishes, between the Captain and the dragoman, the latter finally returned supinely to that less compressed part of the deck, which had been reserved for Athena and her father, who, surrounded by a curious group of peasants of many different near-Eastern nationalities were rather the whole pivot, than the mere center of attraction

The guide dropped down into the seat, and drooled de-

jectedly:

"I av 'eard of cer-tain peepul who hold ritch peepul for ran-sum, but eet eez for first time I know making quaranteen for ritch peepul to pay backsheesh."

"What?" asked Ward, who quickly understood the broken English. "Has this quarantine been especially pre-

pared to extort money from us?"

"Y-es. I think, gen-tulman, that eet eez for corrupting of-fi-cial to get much backsheesh, and I am being afraid that you think that I am bad dragoman."

"Well, ask the Captain how much he wants," commanded

Ward.

The dragoman's face flexed up with a sly look, and bowing obsequiously, he went to comply with the command, and returning shortly, said:

"Theez bad Cap-tain ask one thou-sand mejedie."

"What!" exclaimed Ward. "One thousand mejedie?"
"Y-es," responded the dragoman casting his eyes to the dirty deck of the boat.

"But that," insisted Ward, "would be paying a bribe, not giving a tip. I never give bribes. I only give rewards

and tips."

The dragoman raised his hand to heaven as in a suplication, and then with gritted teeth, shook his clenched fists towards the Captain, who, from his wheel, responded in an explosion of vituperation, stamping his foot until the

decrepit deck rattled.

"I wish that we had brought the Baron," remarked Ward calmly. "I don't understand why he advised us to take this dragoman and leave our servants behind. This seems to be a rather isolated part of the sea, and now it is after office hours, if they really have anything of that sort here. I presume that if it is a bonafide quarantine that we will have to stay here until morning at least, unless we can get somebody ashore with the message to have the Baron release us. I would gladly pay the thousand mejedie were it not an absolute violation of every principle I have ever had. But you simply cannot stay here over night," he said solicitously to Athena. "I would not for the world let you undergo a night on such a horrid little craft as this."

Suddenly an idea occurred to him.

"Here," he asked of the guide. "Who is the owner of this craft?"

"The Captain sez that he be the own-er."

"How much does he say that the thing is worth?"

"I weel go to see," responded the dragoman slyly, and

then returned reporting:

"He say that he can no sell, but that he weel give right to go on ship to Constantinople, and be-side, he want cash money."

Ward looked at him musingly, and repeated:

"Cash money, he wants, does he? Well, I haven't much cash money when it comes to buying a ship," and absent-mindedly putting his hand down into his deep trousered pocket, he pulled out a wallet heavy with American Eagles (he always carried American gold with him on his travels), whose clear metallic chink, of golden tone never to be mistaken, came through the thickness of the leather. He balanced it in his hand for a moment, the coins clinking all the while.

"I don't know how much there is here," he mused, "but I will give this and ten times or twenty times as much more when I get to Constantinople to anyone who will save my daughter from the annoyance of staying on this dirty steamer."

"Yes," remarked the dragoman. "Not only dir-tee, but so many seek peepul too. See," and he pointed his fat, oily hand down the deck, "now they vomit with the sick-

ness."

As he spoke, the violent, hard, rasping vomiting of a cholera victim, which once heard is never forgotten, came to them from the farther end of the deck, from which the rest of the passengers were fleeing as if from a lazaret of lepers, leaving the poor victim writhing, purging and vomiting in the fatal and quick action of the sickness.

Athena put her hands up to her face to shut off the dreadful sight. All about her was confusion and riot, as the passengers, all of the lower class, ran to the other side of the boat until it listed so that her folding chair slipped

from beneath her.

"Now you see!" cried the dragoman. "You see that thees

quarantine is re-ul."

Ward pushed through the crowd over against the taffrail, pulling Athena and her stool along with him, extending his hand behind his back and still clinging to hers.

"We must get out of this as soon as possible," he

whispered to the dragoman.

"But they will shoot! They will shoot!" exclaimed the

dragoman excitedly.

Ward reflected. . . . The predicament was indeed serious. Their lives were in danger by an immediate contact with the actual presence of cholera. He did not know much about the sickness; did not know whether it was contagious or infectious—er both. But he did know that it was one of the most dreadful sicknesses ever suffered by humanity. He considered the frailty of his own old age as nothing compared to the nervous shock which his daughter would have to endure with those agonizing victims of the plague.

"How long is this quarantine supposed to last?" he

calmly asked of the dragoman.

"I don't know," stammered the dragoman. "I on-ly know that quarantena means for-tee. Sometimes I hear that they make eet for-tee days. May-bee sometimes more—may-bee sometimes less."

"But you are the only one who can talk English on the boat, and you must interpret for us, and get us out of this as soon as you can. Whatever service you may do me will be well rewarded," declared Ward.

"But I am Ar-menian; not Turk," returned the dragoman, "and the Turkish Cap-tain always call me bad names,

for not being Turk-, but only Christ-ian dog."

"My daughter speaks French and German. Perhaps there may be among these those who can speak those languages," suggested Ward in the vain hope of extending his acquaintance to someone who would help him in his predicament.

"Ah, no," responded the dragoman. "All these peepul poor. Farm and labor peepul. They only speak Armenian,

Turk or Kurd."

"Let me speak to my daughter alone a moment," said Ward, quietly gathering Athena up from her chair.

Her face was white and her lips quivering.

"Oh, father!" she exclaimed, "I fear so much for you. We are in danger, aren't we? In danger of that awful sickness and then from these dreadful men."

"Oh, do not be alarmed, daughter. I am sure it will only be a question of a short time before I can find some way to get us out of this fix."

There was not even the semblance of a cabin on the little side wheeler. Nothing but a sort of a long table screwed down before the steering wheel which served the Captain as both mess table and bed. Just beyond it was the only water cask on the boat, and to it the cholera victim had crawled on his hands and knees and was splashing his hands into it, fouled with the filth of the deck and his own poisonous sputum, in a vain effort to drink, while the other passengers drew back from him in terror.

The Turkish Captain, who had been down into the engine pit, coming up, aimed a kick at the sick man. Ward, on a sudden impulse, strode forward and seized him by the

shoulder.

"By God," he exclaimed, with flashing eyes. "I'm pretty old but if you kick that sick man again I will throw you overboard!"

The Turk looked at him doggedly, his fists clinched and body poised as though he would lunge upon the old man, but as Ward still steadily gazed at him, with face earnest and resolute, he cringed downward in an obsequious bow, which showed the white lines of his teeth in a snarling smile, muttering something in Turkish.

The dragoman came up.

"Tell him," commanded Ward, "that he is the skipper of this boat and must treat all his passengers humanely; that he should make some immediate arrangement for the care of the sick man."

The dragoman apparently did as he was directed. The Armenian and Turk, indulged again in a cross-fire talk, which finally, Oriental-wise, resulted in a confidential deliberation.

"What does he say?" asked Ward of the dragoman.

"'Im say y-es. Y-es, that 'im will do what you wish. I tol 'im that you ritch American and eef he no want plen-ty trou-ble that he must let you go a-shore. 'im say y-es. That he have two good men to let take you come a-shore. But not teel night, for then no one can see to shoot.'

Ward hastened to return to his daughter to tell her the good news. Some blankets were furnished them, laid upon the paddles of one of the wheels, where, in a measure, they were in cleaner surroundings, and where they awaited the setting of the sun and the approach of night for their escape.

The ancient side wheels of the little boat were of a high

grotesque pattern whose paddles were opened from one side to the other.

Shortly after night-fall, the lap of oars in the still water approached them from around the other side of the boat.

"Ah," murmured Ward, pressing his daughter's hand. "They have kept their word. They are coming to take us

Athena heaved a sigh of relief, and answered by a re-

sponding pressure of her father's hand.

The boat lightly touched against the wheel box and a hand, reaching up out of the darkness, motioned for them

"We won't bother about the baggage now," whispered Ward. "We're glad enough to get away as it is. Here, I'll go first to make sure that it is all right. Be careful that you do not trip on your dress."

Slowly and cautiously he threw himself out over the

lowest tread of the paddle wheel.

Athena heard the rowboat grate against the steamer's side as he got into it. Then there rasped out a heavy exhaust of breath which she could not realize came from her The sound of whispered ejaculations followed, father. weird and uncanny in a strange language; and then before she could give herself the slightest account of what was happening, the muffled oars pulled the boat away and all was confusion about her on the deck.

"Father! Oh, father!" she cried in a loud voice that

rang out over the still waters.

But there was no answering call. . . . Her father had been taken from her.

XI SWEET WATERS OF ASIA

The military guard from the end of the Bridge of Galata uttered a snarl of commands whose confusion hardly fitted the precision with which the change was made under tactics taught by German drill masters.

A man came hurrying by, dressed in European clothes, but of such make and pattern and so inconspicuous that the most cosmopolitan observer could not have been able from

them to have guessed his nationality.

As he came along past the guard, he slackened his pace, and finally stood under the protecting shade of the awning

of a brass-ware merchant opposite.

With an alert eye he watched the muscular, stocky forms of the soldiers, dressed in their color-run, cheap cotton uniforms, with nothing but the red of their fezes to carry the uniformity of the otherwise faded dress. But there was a look of admiration in the stranger's face as he watched how the brown hands snapped the rifles back to their shoulders and the stolid, emotionless faces dressed first to the right and then front. He still stood and watched until the rifles, at the order, crashed to the ground, heels clacking together then the snap of the hands at present, the carry and finally the heavy tread and stamp over the paving stones as the new guard filed in and the old guard filed away.

"Not such a bad lot after all. I don't suppose there is a man there who has not been under fire a dozen times," said the onlooker to himself. "Strange," he continued in his reflection, "there is no duty so important but that I always have a minute to watch any sort of a soldier, but I certainly have no time to lose now," and with this final thought he hurried past the line of cab horses, tossing away the flies with their noses, and rushing out upon the bridge in his haste almost (marvelous to relate) got by the white robed toll collector, whose pocketless white gown was the uniform of Turkish dishonesty and a strait jacket of official restraint.

Even as he gave over to the toll collector, whose hand was already half filled with coins, one of the copper-alloyed bits of silver, sinister tokens of Turkish minting, he scanned the Golden Horn, to the right and the left, and then bounded forward, farther out on the bridge, still looking about him.

Beyond loomed up the tower of Galata, over the facades, and roofs of the European style buildings fringed out be-

yond by the shaggy outline of cypress.

A look of disappointment came over his face. He slackened his pace, although still looking eagerly over either side of the bridge rail, as he hurried onward.

Finally he stopped and taking out a small field glass

looked up on the Golden Horn.

Two or three loungers gathered about him, and an old

carrier, with a final groan under his heavy burden, threw it aside, putting his hand on his back as he somewhat straightened himself, mopping his forehead and looking at the athletic, sinewy form of the foreigner, who stood gazing off along the winding line of the Golden Horn, entirely regardless of the fact that he had excited the curiosity of onlookers.

Suddenly he uttered an exclamation of joy, and running down upon one of the boat landings, jumped into one of those quaint caiques, little oar boats with skate-like lines, and at a quiet command was hurriedly oared away in the direction in which he had been gazing.

Well out in midstream he altered his course, going out farther and farther toward the Sweet Waters of Asia. Finally he ordered the boatman to take him directly over

to where the white, bird-like form of a yacht lay.

"I hardly dare," thought he to himself, "go any nearer, for it does not seem safe to let that fellow Magnus know the Prince released me from the prison where Magnus put me and I have followed here. It is best to leave well enough alone. They can't leave until they have cleared through the Captain of the port, and in the meantime I can enlist our American Minister's service to find out whether the Wards are here in safety."

He ordered himself landed at a point well out from the bridge, jumped into a cab and was soon at the entrance

of the American embassy.

"Your card, please," said the embassy Dragoman. The broad-shouldered stranger slipped out in his sunburnt hand a modest bit of pasteboard upon which was engraved the simple name:

TIMOTHY O'ROURKE

XII THE ISLES OF PRINCES

O'Rourke went to the embassy in forethought of his plans, for he did not want to commence his operations against Magnus until he had established his identity at the embassy as a precaution for the necessity of invoking the aid of the American representative in case of complications.

Hence his call was largely perfunctory. The Minister had heard of him—in fact had read some of his books—and invited him cordially to luncheon, an invitation which, under the circumstances of O'Rourke's haste, could not be accepted. So after a brief call he took his leave and went to the hotel where he had ascertained that Magnus had taken lodgings for Ward

and his daughter.

Being told that they had both gone over on a jaunt to Broussa, he lost no time in hurrying over the Sea of Marmora, fearful lest the quarantine, of which he knew before the Wards themselves might, in some way, interfere with his rejoining Athena and her father. He took measures against being detained by the quarantine upon his return by hiring a small caique which he could row or sail himself.

He arrived at Modania only to find that those he sought had left on the last little steamer for Constantinople, which was pointed out to him as a blotch of smoke hardly discern-

able in the distance.

He immediately set out to follow it. He was anxious that his return to Constantinople might be as prompt as possible. The steamer shaped its course around the Isles of the Princes and the breeze failing him, he despaired of ever making Constantinople within a half dozen hours after the others had returned.

But when he came around the Isles of the Princes, he was delighted to find that the steamer was anchored far in the distance toward Toulza. The shelter of the islands took away from him what little breeze was still blowing and he was thus obliged to give up the use of the sail and to bend himself to the laborious rowing of the boat against the tide bearing down into the Bosphorus.

Night had long fallen before he finally came up within hail-

ing distance of the steamer and before he could finally account

to himself the reason of its being anchored.

"Perhaps," thought he, "the passengers have all left and proceeded in caiques to the City, and my long pull in their search will prove of no avail."

But as he came nearer he heard voices and the movement on the boat, which still continued, incited by the calling of Athena for her father on his disappearance some half an hour before. He came nearer and could hear the voice of the dragoman in a loud tone, trying to exculpate himself to Athena.

"Ah, dear ladee! It ees not my fault! I will go look for your fathaire as soon as it ees light—eef he do not come back. . . . But now there ees no boat to go in," and other broken parts of conversation in which, as the caique glided noiselessly onward through the still water and came as near as he dared to bring it within the rim of light, which showed from the smoky lantern of the boat, he heard the voice that he knew so well—the voice of Athena, pleading in a high-pitched tone of intense excitement.

"But we must go! We must go at once! Some harm must have befallen him, for he did not answer when I called. We

must go to find him!"

"But there is no boat to go," repeated the dragoman. "Even eef one should come, the ignorant passengers would smash eet, so crazee are they to get away from the seekness."

O'Rourke rested on his oars and reflected, still well concealed from the observation of any on the boat. He could hardly believe what he had heard, but there was no mistaking Athena's voice and it connected well with the conversation which came from the other.

"Evidently," thought he, "her father has disappeared mysteriously and she is trying to rejoin him but cannot because there is no boat, and even if there were a boat the terrified passengers would founder it by jumping into it."

He put his hand out and let it rest in the water. The tide was running strong and against him, but the water was warm. A swim wouldn't harm him. Quickly he groped into the bow of the boat for a fishing net which had been left there—a net of coarse cord. With his knife he ripped it up so as to make a long line of the pieces, which he tied together as he cut them loose, playing them carefully out into the water so that they would not ravel after he had tied one end to the gunwale.

"That ought to be long enough now to reach the steamer,"

he reflected as he knotted on the final piece.

He took off his hat, then his coat, waistcoat and shoes, and then lightly let himself over the side of the caique into the water, pushing the boat gently away from him. With a quiet stroke, that hardly made a sound or a ripple, he swam toward the steamer, at the point where he still heard the loud voice of the dragoman talking excitedly.

"Yes, ladee. I will find yo-ur fathaire as soon as the light comes. Do not be 'fraid, ladee. I will be pro-tect-ing you."

O'Rourke swam aside to get the benefit of the shadow thrown by the wheel box and was overjoyed to find that the paddle slats were open from outside straight into the steamer. He drew himself up on one of the treads and, tying his line to it, waited for a chance to make himself known to Athena, who was now but a couple of arm lengths from him and whom the excited crowd had pushed up close to the paddle box.

A terrible burst of vomiting from one of the sick caused a movement among the passengers as they tried to get away from the victim, and in the confusion O'Rourke said to Athena in as loud a voice as he dared:

"It is I-O'Rourke, who have come. Please don't speak

but follow."

His heart sank as he saw no movement from the shadow

where she was standing.

"Come—please, quickly," he pleaded, as the commotion on the deck was again renewed, and darting forward he seized her gown to pull her toward him. He felt the soft

fabric first resist his hand and then yield.

Then he heard a loud, strange cry in an unknown tongue, coming with a thick gutteral from the throat of the dragoman, and he felt the wool of her dress being dragged and torn away from his grasp as there was a sudden glare of light from a small electric lamp bursting full into his face.

Quickly reaching up, he dashed the lamp down into the water and, throwing his arms about Athena, in a moment he found himself struggling in the sea with her soft form

clinging to him.

XIII IN THE MARMORA

The fall brought O'Rourke well away from the boat and seemed to stun Athena, for she lay limp as if dead.

To return to the boat would be to lose all that he had risked so much to gain. His caique could not be far away and once they were within it, they would be safe to go to look for her father and seek safety themselves. It did not seem strange to him to have Athena in his arms and he did not even wonder at the extreme suppleness of her waist whose line was hardly broken by the most simple and yielding of stays. As her hair brushed up over his face, soft and silky, giving out from the salt wetness of the water a light fragrance of musk, there was no thought in his mind that he held close to him, so that he could feel every heaving of her breast, the beautiful woman of his life. No, he thought not of her but of her father. Her he knew he had safe-at least it never occurred to him that he would not be able to bring Athena to safety—but the father, his benefactor—the man to whom he felt himself bound by ties of gratitude as to no other man-where was he? It was of her father that he thought, and how he might rescue him from that mysterious taking away.

After he was out in the black shadow beyond the ship's lantern, he zigzagged back and forth looking for the boat. Once or twice he thought he felt his foot kicking against the mooring line which he had improvised, but feeling down with his hand he found that it was only part of the binding of Athena's skirt ripped off in the fall.

"I must get away from here at once," he muttered. "In a few moments they may be lighting up and come to look for us. It is lucky that we are in a land where everything seems to fail the natives in emergencies. What a wretched old tub. I wonder whatever induced them to take it."

He was entirely calm and swam along easily. The tide, he knew, was helping him, for, as he turned to swim backward to the point where he thought that the boat ought to be, it was hard for him to stem it with his burden.

"Yes, the boat was gone; the tide is carrying it away and

it has such a good start of me that I will never be able to overtake it, unless she, too, can swim, and even then we might pass within a few feet of it and never know in this blackness."

Anxiously he scanned the water about him.

"Yes, there is a light ahead and it must be on the island," thought he. "I can make it, if, when she comes to, she does not become hysterical."

He made no effort to revive her, knowing that her unconsciousness was, for the moment, of great assistance to him. There was one thing that he wanted to do—to take off her shoes and skirt so as to reduce her weight, and especially her skirt, as it was continually twisting itself up in his feet. But to do this, even justified by the peril of the hour, shocked him in the very thought. The heavy woolen jacket she wore, however, he slipped off from her shoulders. As he did so, she breathed heavily and then he felt her arms closing about his neck.

"Please don't. Please don't," he pleaded, "or we may

both be lost."

He pinioned her arms, one arm down between his body and hers, and then, reaching his arms about her, took the other and made the stroke to keep their balance while he treaded hard against the water.

"Can you swim?" he asked.

She screamed until, with the movement of her head, the salt water choked away all utterances save an hysteria of coughing.

"Don't you remember me?" he asked, still treading in the water and making the stroke with her hands imprisoned

in his own.

She could not answer.

"Don't you remember me? I am O'Rourke who told you on the Acropolis how he loved your father and who is going now with you to save him," he said.

The salt water which she had swallowed as she screamed seemed to make her brain clearer when she had freed herself from it, and finally she asked quite calmly:

"You will not let me drown, will you?"

"No, not if you do as I tell you."

"I will," she said, relaxing her body. "I will, for I must be saved to look for my father."

"Then," he commanded, "lay your hand lightly on my

shoulder, and grip your fingers in my collar. That's the way," he added, after a moment, when she had done as he had asked. "No, not quite so hard. Close your mouth, breath easily and hold up your head, looking always at the light. That is the shore there and not so very far off."

"How far?" she asked.

"Oh, two or three miles. But the water is warm and the surface splendid for swimming. You will help me make it, won't you?"

"I will," she answered resolutely and with revived

strength in her voice.

For some minutes she listened to the splash of his stroke

and was glad when he asked:

"We are wearing too many clothes. It will be prudent to get down to a bathing costume if possible, for the tide here I feel is making a current away from the shore and down toward the Bosporus."

"Is there danger?"

"Not if we are careful. Can you take off your shoes and—, well, what other clothes you don't actually need."

"I—, I am afraid I can't," she faltered.

"Then allow me," he returned and treading in the water,

he held her upright.

"Ah, it is fortunate that the shoes have buttons instead of laces," he remarked, as he stripped down one and then the other. "And now you really won't need the skirt. It is as heavy as a sheet anchor."

One by one he felt for her heavier garments, she resting in his arms and moving from side to side like a little child

in the hands of its nurse.

"Thank you," he said, as she formally helped him with the unhooking of her stays. "See, now you will be more comfortable and are so light that you can hang on with one hand. We ought to make it in an hour perhaps or in a couple of hours at most."

"In a couple of hours!" she exclaimed. "Can you hold

out that long?"

"Yes," he answered resolutely. "For you are no burden to me now. Hold tight, for I am going to take the man-of-war stroke which will carry us ahead in double time," and when he felt her grip tightened to him, half submerging his face from time to time in the water to overcome the resistance and obtain better balance, he plunged forward with light, easy, powerful strokes.

She felt quite calm now. . . . She no longer had any fear of their rescue. With such a man as O'Rourke, she was satisfied that it would be only a question of a short time before they would be both saved and start out a successful hunt for her father. In her heart she thanked God for having sent O'Rourke, and at that time—that awful hour when she was almost beside herself with grief amid those terrible sickening scenes after the mysterious disappearance of her father.

"See, we are coming in much more quickly now," calmly remarked O'Rourke as he changed his stroke. "Now there

are two lights when before we only saw one."

"Oh, what a pity that I cannot swim," deplored Athena.

"Is there anything I can do to help you?"

O'Rourke did not answer, but slackened his stroke, and, as she floated up over him, she heard him trying to suppress a groan. Then she felt her face plunging deep down into the water, her nose stinging, her ears ringing with the plunge, and the blackness of suffocation mantling over her.

She was sure that she was drowning and that O'Rourke

was drowning with her.

XIV THE CAIQUE

"Lie on your back—lie on your back," commanded O'Rourke, spinning her around in his arms. "It's just a cramp, but these salt water cramps are bad when they do come. Just rest for a moment and I am sure that I will be over it in a moment."

Quietly she obeyed and felt herself floating over him. Her hair spreading out over his face distressed her and she felt guilty in its possession, thinking that it disturbed him. For a moment they rested in silence.

"Listen!" he suddenly exclaimed. "Be perfectly still.

Listen!" and he held her rigidly over him.

Through the silence, over the unruffled water they heard

the lap-lap of some object floating on the water.

"Ah," joyously exclaimed O'Rourke. "It is the boat. It is the boat—my caique—and now we are verily saved."

They still listened and then, resuming his over-hand stroke, they shot through the water in the direction of the sound, finally coming to a dim outline that shut out the lights from the shore.

"Thank God!" exclaimed O'Rourke. "It is my caique. And how providential! If it hadn't been for that cramp and the rest I was taking, in the noise of my strokes, I would

never have heard it."

Asking her to steady herself on the gunwale, he carefully pulled himself aboard and then brought her safely in.

He took the clothes which he found as he had left them and, turning his back to her white dripping form, said:

"Wrap yourself with this coat and blanket while I consider what should be done. Be careful to keep your balance, for these caiques are very treacherous."

He heard her obeying him and it was almost in a new

voice that she asked anxiously:

"And you—will you not catch your death of cold in those wet clothes?"

He laughed.

"No. I am too tough for that, and beside, although the climate of Constantinople is very changeable, the salt Sea of Marmora is nearly constant in the temperature of its water, and if I should feel cold, why, I will simply go over and warm up in the water."

"When shall we look for my father?"

"That is just what I was thinking. I believe that it would be best if we go right on to Constantinople, where I can leave you in comfort and safety and then with a steamer under police authority I will be back early in the morning to find him."

"You know best," she responded simply.

"I know these waters fairly well. As soon as we get beyond that point of the island we shall see Constantinople. The wind is in the right direction for a very quick return."

He set the sail and in a few moments they were scuddling

on with the shore lights to guide them.

"I know a landing just beyond the Seraglio. We will go ashore there. There's a cab stand not far away, and none of the custom officers to trouble. Please feel in my pocket and see if any money is still there."

She felt and as he heard the coins clinking, he said in a

relieved tone:

"Well and good. With money one can do almost anything

in Turkey."

The lights of Constantinople came nearer and the sky above clearing, the stars shone out and in their light Athena could see the rugged, handsome profile of her companion as, busy with sail and tiller, he drove the light craft forward.

Some strange impulse seemed to possess her from the reaction of her emotion which had now set in, and sliding over into the seat where he was, she put her hand out caressingly and pityingly upon his wet hair. Then suddenly she threw herself upon his shoulder and sobbed out like a child.

XV WHAT HAPPENED TO WARD

It did not take O'Rourke long to organize his searching party, and in a special steamer—the largest he could obtain—with the prefect of police and a platoon of soldiers, hardly had dawn broken before they arrived alongside the little quarantined steamer. The dragoman and the captain both vigorously protested their innocence.

Small boats were put out in all directions to scour every cove of the Isles of the Princes, and the Asiatic shore line. O'Rourke was hopeful that by the noon hour he would have some comforting news of success to send back to Athena, whom he had left comfortably quartered in her apartments in the hotel under the immediate care of the women of the American embassy. But the hours dragged along and one boat after another returned with no news of the old man.

The prefect took great interest in the case, but Turk-like, smiled resignedly when, after they had combed the sea and dragged and scoured about for hours, he said to O'Rourke:

"Ah! It is the will of Allah. He must be out in the deep sea. There is no hope to find him—no hope."

O'Rourke turned on him fiercely.

"Do you mean to say that you would give up the search

when it is only just begun?"

"Ah, well," responded the official. "It is fate. Both the Captain and the Dragoman are, I am convinced, innocent. It is simply, in my opinion, a case of robbery. A couple of

these hoodlum passengers, in order to escape the danger of cholera and the quarantine, probably slipped into the boat while it was being prepared for the old man and his daughter, and in order to gain possession of it, knocked him in the head, robbed him of his money and then threw him overboard," and carried on by his own recital, he gestured with his hands as if throwing something into the sea, continuing the gestures even after he had finished speaking.

"But the boat—where is that? Do you mean to say that you will give up the search without having found the boat?"

"Oh, you know what a boat is. A touch of tinder and its pitchy sides go up in flames, or a few shovelfuls of sand and it is buried. Why search for it?"

O'Rourke looked at him scornfully.

"Well," remarked the official. "What do you think can still be done?"

"Have you thoroughly published the fact of the reward

which will be paid for any information?"

"Ah, yes. But in Turkey to offer such a large reward as you propose would only excite suspicion among these ignorant people. They would think that it was some trap laid for them. If I were in your place I would quietly wait for a few days and then we can come out and shoot off the cannon; that, I am sure, will bring the body to the surface."

"But what will you do to bring the guilty ones to justice?"
"Well, what can be done? There is no list of the passengers. Anybody who could pay the fare came aboard. The skipper does not even know the exact number of those

he took on."

O'Rourke reflected, and then questioned:

"Will you not have your secretary take a deposition from each of the passengers aboard the Modania steamer?"

"Certainly, if you think that it will do any good."

O'Rourke himself stood by as one after another of the passengers came forward, anxiously scanning their faces, and listening to the half dozen strange tongues used by the interpreters. He, himself, caused questions to be put to establish the identity of them all while the futility of the search slowly dawned upon him in spite of all his sanguine and stout-hearted hope. Many new cases of cholera had broken out and he arranged to have the sick cared for in comfortable improvised hospital tents set up on the nearest point of the shore. He, himself, got out a naphtha launch and searched the whole shore length beneath Mt. Bourgoulou.

The day seemed to him at times interminably long; yet the sun was sinking before he knew it. And as he looked and saw the glory of the sky gilding the distant minarets and domes and painting the shore with the beauty of the setting sun, a deep sadness seized him and he reflected.

"Ah! What a mysterious end to a noble life—to pass out here in this strange un-Christian land without even a prayer

or a comforting word. . . ."

And his heart grew sad and heavy as he thought of Athena—of the daughter waiting—waiting for the father who, perchance, would never more return.

XVI WHEN THIEVES PRAY

Two Arabs sat bathing their feet, arms and faces in the pool outside the Mosque Saint Sophia, amid the crowd of other Mussulmans performing their ablutions for worship in the great Temple. Neither spoke to the other, yet it was clear that they were companions, for they measured the time of their bathing, and lingered while others came and went. . . .

One of them cast his face upward, and in the single glance of the face as he gazed towards the mass of the Temple's dome and still higher to where the marble shafts shot high up into the heavens, he showed features stolidly brutal, with a sneering set curve to the lips. The other watched his reflection in the water before him, but did not look upward, until as he bent forward from beneath his tunic of camel's hair, came a metallic clink—the musical resonance of which is the quality alone of the most precious of all metals. . . Looking into the water, under the pretence of still bathing his face, the first worshiper pressed his lips in a sign of warning, glancing with a sinister expression sidewise. And then, as they both stood upward, each turning his back towards the other, the jingle of the metal was no longer heard.

They separated, . . . one going one way, the other another. They entered the mosque by different doorways, shuffling off their worn and soiled sandals. Their bare feet

tracked over the carpet at different angles, but which reunited them before the holy altar of the Mihrab. Here they commenced their prayers, prostrating themselves, salaaming, striking their foreheads on the ground, muttering their supplications in the fanaticism of their firm and strong belief.

One of them became so devout and abstracted in his orisons as to throw himself forward with such force that again from within his coarse tunic came the music of the tinkling gold, which called forth from the other a sudden outspread gesture of the fingers, a gesture in protest and warning, as he, too, threw himself forward, but cautiously, in continuation of the worship.

Each, under his soiled, muslin turban, glanced about backward, and sidewise, to see if anyone had heard, and when they saw they were quite alone they moved even closer in their prayers towards the Mihrab, until they were finally head by head together.

"Be careful, brother," whispered the older, still continuing his worship. "Be careful, for the whole world knows the sound of gold, and knows that such as we never possess

it, even by Allah's just allotment."

"My pouch is large," muttered the other. "Hast thou

not a cloth that I may smother the sound?"

The other arose, and with abstracted face and closed eyes, praying even more fervently for the moment, threw himself down prostrate, at the same time thrusting the ragged end

of a torn turban over to his fellow worshiper.

"Take it, and silence the treacherous sound," came with his bated breath. "It is all that we have to fear. No one else knows. The glib song of this gold alone can betray us. . . And then it is foreign gold, with the sign of the eagle upon it."

"But we shall have to spend a piece," responded the other, "for verily we have fasted long, and I am empty with

hunger."

"Not until we are on the road to Anah, shall we know aught of food," responded the other. "Go thou thy way and I will go mine, and there, beyond, in the bazaar, I know a brother who has a camel, old and infirm, but which will serve our purpose."

"But if I should be taken-I, who know not the ways of

this great city, what shall then happen?"

"Death shall come to thee, for thy gold shall betray thee."

"But thou who hast been a father to me," pleaded the other, greatly disturbed by the warning given by the stronger and older one. "Why must thou leave me now? Verily, as thou sayest, the gold will betray us, thee as well as me. Wherefore let us then not separate, for together we shall have strength and cunning to find our safety before they may know. For how otherwise, if eaptured, can we explain the possession of this large wealth of foreign gold except that each shall protect the other by swearing that we found it by the wayside."

A cunning look came into the eyes of the older.

"Yes, thou speakest true," he returned. "But having found it by the wayside, how can we explain that we have divided it to the moiety. Do two men together find and carry each a single pouch of gold?"

"What do you mean?"

"Only that if we should be taken, that both having gold will be questioned. And from the two stories will contradictions come which verily will show our guilt, whereas if one alone has the gold, alone upon him will fall the fury of the law and at least one of us will be safe."

The words had the desired effect upon the younger. "Who shall then take the gold?" he anxiously asked.

"Thou, of course," responded the other, prostrating himself deeply, so that the cunning expression on his face would not betray his craftiness. "Thou, verily being the younger, can better endure the torture than I, upon whom already the sun is shining from the west."

"But thou speakest the language of our rulers," protested the other. "Verily it were better that thou takest the foreign gold, and then we shall still go on together, and when we have come to a secret place far beyond the walls, then again I shall retake my half of what Allah has given us from the wealth of the Christian dog. And with it our tribes will grow great."

The other continued silently in prayer, until after a long and final prostration, with his face sidewise on the floor, he

whispered:

"Tis Allah's will and I consent. Give me the gold, even

though blood shall be upon me."

The other slipped the clinking pouch over to him. It quickly disappeared in the folds of his burnous.

He sighed languidly and resignedly; then again repeated:

"Yea, 'tis the will of Allah, and should I be taken, verily say that the gold was found by the wayside e'en though they may know that it is more than all thy tribe and all my tribe could have put aside in a generation."

The younger of the two appeared to be more buoyant as

he arose unburdened from his share of the spoil.

"Follow but do not speak," commanded the other as he

arose and stalked down through the Mosque.

The admonition was hardly necessary, for the younger, during the short period that he had been possessed of the gold had undergone the most tantalizing misery of his life. He was mute with relief.

As the older disappeared for a moment in the gateway of the Mosque, a slight suspicion flashed through his mind—a suspicion, however, which quickly vanished, for he saw that he was waiting beyond.

"Verily he is honest," he reflected, "for if he would rob me of the plunder, why should he have ever forsooth

given it to me in the first place?"

So confident and happy in the new relation of things, he shuffled down and over the Place of Saint Sophia and fell to wondering in his wild fashion of the desert, at the unnecessary bigness and greatness of the buildings about him, glancing back spellbound at the mass of the enormous mosque and the shafts of its minarets.

A hoarse cry of "Guarda, Guarda," from a voice coming beneath a quarter ton load of wares, strapped upon the almost double bent back of a street carrier, caused him to hesitate a moment. Then he followed on with a smile upon his face, reflecting that with all his gold he would never have to labor in that body racking fashion. He glanced curiously at the obelisk and then the pillar of Hercules excited his wonder; until a tramway, rattling down the street held him riveted to the spot, for it was his first visit to a city.

But with all this distraction, he kept a close eye upon his companion, who, in his soiled white burnous stalked on

down past the "Burnt Column."

With every step his confidence increased—that wild, independent confidence of the Bedouin—a confidence which, when once obtained, is as unchanging as the belief in the rising of the sun. More and more he allowed himself to become interested in the strange new sights about him, wondering why they boxed up the saplings by the sides of the streets, laughing contemptuously at the "Burnt Column," and reflecting upon the folly of building up such high monuments when sometime they would verily by the will of Allah fall to pieces. Passing a native restaurant he listened, with watering mouth, to the sputter of the grease, frying honeyed fritters into a rich appetizing brown, but an angry, inquiring look from the cook soon sent him on his way.

He came to a wonderful little building, quite isolated by itself, from the shade of whose leaden roof rose up the airy outline of minareted domes.

The shade was pleasing to him, and the varied colored mosaic of shining marble gratified his barbarian eye. But more than all this, it was the gurgle of the water from the fountain which drew his attention.

"If I cannot eat, I, at all events, can drink," thought he, and again and again he slaked his thirst from the clear water pouring into the hollow of his hand.

He had lingered longer than he should and hurrying back into the street was glad to see that his confidence had not been abused, but that the other was in the street waiting

for him to come up.

"Verily," muttered the leader, when the two had drawn aside in a corner unobserved. "Verily, our hunger is great, and I, too, am weary and faint. Yonder is a money changer, one of those whom they call Jews. With him would I fain change one of the pieces. Wait thou then here, and I will come soon again, for the gold is not of this realm, and it would be our undoing to show even one of the pieces in the Bazar."

The Bedouin nodded his approval, his lips smacking at the thought of appeasing his hunger. He waited patiently, still engrossed in the sights about him. He waited until the sun had thrown the shadow of the "Burnt Column" already into the first hour of afternoon. Still he waited, restraining his suspicion. Then his hunger finally commenced to make him irritable, and returning to the fountain, but with his eyes ever fixed upon the rendez-vous which he had left, he again slaked his thirst. He looked at the shadow of the column again impatiently. Finally his hunger broke away his self-restraint, he became more irritated, and from famishing exasperation came suspicion. Still he waited, vainly hoping.

"The knave," thought he. "Can it be that he has de-

ceived me. Would that I could speak the language of the Jew and I would go and ask to seek him out."

He reflected for a moment.

"Verily the Jew, as a money changer, is rich, and being rich, will know all things and all languages. Therefore, perchance, he may know my tongue."

So, reflecting, he made his way to the money changer's

booth.

"Speak ye Arabic?"

The Jew nodded his head, answering in Arabic:

"What wantest thou?"

"Did one such as I come to change some strange gold?"
The Jew shook his head.

"He did not come?"

The Jew gestured another negation and then turned to busy himself with his accounts.

"Then I have been betrayed. I have been robbed," cried the Bedouin fiercely, making his midst eloquent with vociferation and crowded with large gesticulation. Then he dashed bewilderedly out into the street to vainly search for his deceiver.

On and on he ran. One patrol after another tried to seize him but he eluded their grasp; until finally, one of them brought him down with a crack of a sabre's flat edge full over his turban.

The Bedouin got up, crying out fiercely:

"He has betrayed me and I will betray him! Yes! I will tell all! He throttled the rich stranger and robbed him of his gold, and now he has betrayed me."

The others of the patrol came up and seized him. They

were leading him away when one of them said:

"Thou liest, crazed one, for if it be true, thou wouldst take us to where the man is throttled."

"I will! I will!" vehemently cried the Bedouin, and with a cat-like instinct, even in the midst of the city, he led them on back past the "Burnt Column," the "Mosque of Saint Sophia," the "Column of Hercules," and then down the coast side which looked out over towards Mt. Bourgoulou and the Isles of the Princes.

On and on he strode with his wide desert stride, while his captors bated their breath and followed through the noisome side streets where he led the way.

Finally he stood and pointed downward towards an ancient

ruined fortification built out into the water, within whose floorless enclosure the tide water ebbed and flowed. It would have made a splendid little port for fishing boats had it been only a little larger and had not the flow of the tide almost entirely closed up the sunken gateway which opened to the sea.

"There!" shouted the Bedouin. "There! There is the betrayer's victim," and looking downward they saw a caique bumping lightly against the stone walls and upon its bottom lay the long grey-clad form of a tall man, his arms folded up under his head, and his grey hair blown lightly by the breeze.

XVII "TO GET MARRIED ON"

"If it hadn't been for those thieves falling out, how might I not have fared?" smiled Ward, as propped up on his pillows, he sipped the broth the nurse gave him the second morning after his rescue, and gave O'Rourke and Athena the first narrative of his adventure. "You see," he explained, "I really was done for more than I thought, more nervous than anything else, I guess, and when the tide fell, if I had been carried out to sea, you can hardly tell what might have happened."

"Oh, father," murmured Athena, with a horrified look, as she reached forward and laid her hands over him as if to

assure herself that he really were safe.

"Oh, it wasn't so bad after all, daughter. What puzzles me, though, is just what happened to me when I dropped down into the boat. I only remember that I strangled and then everything was black. I can remember nothing more until I found myself alone in the bottom of that boat with the current swishing past, but held fast at the mouth of the wall. I called but the water made a good deal of noise and the walls were high, so I just turned over from weakness and waited until some one should come. I certainly must have been well on toward the end of my last strength, for I slept or was unconscious, from what you tell me, most of that day."

"Oh, father! What a terrible adventure," murmured Athena, anticipating the nurse in taking the broth bowl

away.

"Well, daughter," smiled the old man. "Adventures are all right if they end well. Why," he continued after he had drawn his napkin over his lips, "it's a part of every man's nature to love adventure."

Athena gave a protesting pout.

"Yes," continued her father, looking up at O'Rourke, "the best part of an adventure is that one really never knows a peril until it is past. I took it for granted yesterday that there was no danger and that if I remained quiet, you, my daughter, would send someone to get me, for my mind was too confused to think that you might yourself, in any way, have gotten into danger, for the whole episode of that wretched little steamer seemed to have passed out of my mind."

The old man's lips touched lightly in a contented smile as he stretched out under the covers and then looked up at O'Rourke and his daughter.

"Pain pretty nearly all gone now," he mused. "I won-

der if they let those fellows go as I requested."

"I told the Prefect of your desire to have them released," remarked O'Rourke.

"Yes. Why not let them go? They tell me that they said that the reason they assaulted me was to get money to establish a family."

"To get married on?" asked Athena.

"More than that," laconically responded her father. "They wanted to become the patriarchs of tribes that would live on forever. That's the Oriental idea of marriage; the laying of a strong foundation, upon which the founders' descendants with each generation build up an increasingly beautiful superstructure. Getting married is a mere episode—but founding a family is starting the pendulum of life in its wide everlasting sweep through all eternity."

The old man looked long at both of them. . . . Then he again spoke, but more slowly the sentiment welled up from

within him.

"As the machinery of law and government grows stronger—the influence of the family grows weaker—until today with us, women look upon marriage sometimes as a mere trade occupation and men regard it as a mere convenience

for comfort. They get married now—but they don't found families as they used to in America. O, how I would love to put the American family back where it was in the days of my youth, when there were few spinsters, fewer bachelors and no divorces, and when the overwhelming ambition of man's life was to found a family."

O'Rourke really did not follow the words at first with any particular stress of thought. Marriage? Yes, why not subjugate it to the iron clad laws of the perfected machinery of government? Of course for the Chinese such obsession of the joy of family founding was all right—for with it went ancestral worship—and, yes, the Hindu—he, of course, knew no completeness of earthly joy unless he had a son to light his funeral pyre; but in America, and among Americans, why not let the family be a mere social institution to subserve the purpose of government rather than the independence of its own existence? There was something of irony in O'Rourke's thought as his mind ran on. Yes, Americans were relegating the family to a rather obscure back seat in the temples of its worship—but why not? Yes, why not? Between a great duty to perform to society and a great duty to perform to its smaller part—the mere family—the obligation of society would always have to come first.

And O'Rourke found himself smiling at the old man's reference to the family conditions of the past. Little did he then dream how soon the revulsion of his feeling was to become and how poignant would be his own desire not merely to marry but to found a family—to attain which he would be prepared to make any sacrifice of ambition.

Then suddenly O'Rourke roused himself and looked from one to the other. His lips parted as if he had something

momentous to tell them.

"Speaking of marriages," he remarked—; then he hesitated and before he could recommence the chief hospital surgeon came up and after salutations the old man asked anxiously:

"You are not going to keep me here long, are you, doctor?"

"Don't see any reason for it," returned he. "You have just suffered a nervous shock from strangulation. With a man of less nervous strength, the rough handling you got might have proved fatal, but now in a few days you will be as good as new."

Athena beamed.

"Well, then, we might as well make our plans to leave. Where is Magnus? Why hasn't he showed up yet?" said Ward.

O'Rourke hastened to make some evasive reply. He had now almost forgotten what he had previously intended to say.

"Oh, I will tell you all about that later on."

"But the yacht and the food relief plan—he should advise with me. By all means, have him come at his earliest convenience, for I feel quite fit now for any sort of business," urged Ward.

But O'Rourke suddenly became so involved in conversation with the Doctor that he did not seem to hear, and, wav-

ing an abrupt farewell, passed off down the corridor.

XVIII MAGNUS AGAIN

A few days later, Ward was well enough to be taken to the hotel and it was all that O'Rourke could do to keep him from getting the chauffeur to drive them down to the Golden

Horn to visit the yacht.

O'Rourke puzzled and reflected as to how he should break the news that Magnus, as O'Rourke had learned, had absconded with the yacht and the Food Relief funds entrusted to him by Ward. It seemed to O'Rourke that the gross breach of confidence would, when revealed, come as an unnecessary blow to Ward. He saw no good reason why he should pillory Magnus as a wicked, unscrupulous man who would descend to any depth of evil doing. He believed that one reason for Magnus' disappearance was the fact that he, O'Rourke, had returned and found him out. He knew that even the ingeniously wicked mind of Magnus could find no way of defending himself against his crimes in having caused the arrest and imprisonment of Coste and himself, and the decoy of the Duchess and her daughter. He held no malice himself against Magnus, for his own lot had not been as hard as that of Coste, whom he had only succeeded in releasing a full fortnight after he, himself, had effected his own release. But how to explain the disappearance of the yacht and at the same time that of Magnus was to him a problem. . . . Yes, and more than that, he realized every hour that the longer they stayed in Constantinople the more difficult it might be to return to Western Europe and then home, for daily the rumors of war were becoming thicker, and once that war was declared, a flight from Turkey by way of the Mediterranean would be well nigh impossible. Truly, the task of safely conducting his benefactor and Athena back to some port from whence they could make their way to America was indeed arduous. . . .

With such reflections as these, he was pacing up and down along the roadway which skirted the cemetery in front of the hotel, when, from an upper window, he heard the voice

of Ward calling him.

"O'Rourke—can you come up? I have a message I want

to read you."

Wondering what it could mean, O'Rourke immediately went up to the apartment where Athena and her father sat at a writing desk examining some mail which they had just received.

"Funny that they did not send such an important message over to the hospital," murmured Ward, passing to O'Rourke a letter, which read:

"My dear Mr. Ward:

"To pen what I would say to you in person would be a long and difficult task. Suffice it to say, if you please, that your yacht, in the first place, has been commandeered by the Government and I, myself, am compelled to return to my own country. Of course you will be fully reimbursed for the loss of your yacht and I will make it my pleasure to represent you at Vienna, but what I most regret is that I am temporarily to be deprived of the honor of assisting you in your philanthropic movement in supplying food to the refugees and that the funds that you so generously advanced me for that purpose will be temporarily held up under the contracts which I have already made, but which, of course, now will have to remain in abeyance for the time being.

"This is all that I can write to-day, but you will hear from me as soon as it is permitted me to again address you.

"Yours in haste, but with the greatest and most profound homage. VON STEIN VRETT.

"P. S.—I understand that Mr. O'Rourke is in town. Please give him my compliments and ask that he do not judge me too harshly until I meet him and explain.

"von S. V."

"Well, that's a pretty how do you do," remarked Ward, when he saw that O'Rourke had finished the reading of the letter. "I particularly counted on Magnus. I don't mind the yacht so much, for I was beginning to think that it would get me in trouble over here sooner or later, and I would rather have the trouble happen when we were off of it rather than when aboard."

He looked inquiringly at O'Rourke, but as O'Rourke still remained silent, continued:

"Seems strange that he didn't call at the hospital to take leave."

"Why, father," broke in Athena, "don't you see that he must have been arrested when they took the yacht; that explains it."

"Yes, I suppose so," returned her father dubiously. "But why wasn't this message delivered to me before? See, it is dated the very day we were returning from Broussa. Yes, that is the day, for he mentions Mr. O'Rourke, and he tells

me that he only arrived on that same day."

Athena looked inquiringly at O'Rourke, who, during the brief conversation, had reflected deeply. To have told them what a scoundrel Magnus was would be most impolitic and would avail nothing. On the contrary, it might prove not only embarrassing to him in his plans to take them to safety but even thwart them. . . . He felt it providential that Magnus had had the yacht fictitiously commandeered for his own private purposes and that he had embezzled the money which Ward had given him for the Food Supply Relief. He was satisfied that neither the father nor the daughter knew anything about Magnus' machinations; of how he had tried to control a throne, and failing, had wantonly caused distress to those whom he could no longer use, and had then profited by the confidence of Ward to despoil him of the yacht and the funds advanced for his philanthropy. His lips pressed firmly as he reflected upon the evil doing of Magnus. He sat down, still slowly fumbling the letter, and then said, measuring every word:

"There are times when it is hard to advise anyone, even to the extent of making the slightest comment. But three things are certain: that your yacht is gone; that Magnus is gone; and that there will soon be war in Turkey."
"War!" exclaimed Athena. "War in this country?"

"Yes," responded O'Rourke, "and perhaps very soon, and if war does surround us here we will be a long ways from home."

"What do you think that we had better do?" asked Ward. "Prepare to leave Turkey at once," returned O'Rourke.

"What is the best way to get out of this confounded

country?" asked Ward.

"There is really only one safe way now, and that is straight back up the Danube to Budapest, from Rustchuk, for I understand that all the railroads between here and there are used exclusively for troop mobilization, and," . . . looking at Athena, he added:

"It will prove far the safer and more comfortable of the two routes for the sea way is now dangerous because of the mines. Furthermore, there are only a few miserable sailings

and they far between and uncertain of destination."

"We will do whatever you say," declared Ward, to which Athena nodded her head approvingly, forgetting immediately her alarm as she looked up into his strong and resolute face.

"Then let us prepare to leave on to-night's boat for Varna," said O'Rourke.

"Can you be ready, daughter?"

"Yes."

"Then I will go at once to arrange for the journey," said O'Rourke, and in the abruptness of the decision, all three forgot about Magnus.

XIX THE HOLY WAR

"I don't understand why Turkey wants to get into this great conflict," remarked Ward, as standing between O'Rourke and Athena they watched the greyish brown towers of the Bosporus as they steamed out for the Black Sea to make the port of Varna.

"It is pretty hard to give a reason for any war," re-

marked O'Rourke. "But the Empire of Turkey was created by fighting just as any other country, and now they realize that it is only by fighting that they can hold their position as a link bumper between the great forces of the East and the West. Look down there," he exclaimed, "there perhaps you may see a reason why there is war," and he pointed toward the forecastle, where, in the steerage, a couple of

Turkish soldiers stood talking together. "Look, they are both members of the Nizam, or regular army. See, the older one of the two, a man I should say nearly fifty, has had most of his teeth knocked out; his face is weather beaten and scarred; he wears his uniform and cartridge belt in a slouchy, careless manner, which shows that he still would prefer his flowing burnous to European dress. You see, he is still a common soldier after perhaps many years of service, but yet notice with what deference the natty, trim young sergeant of the new Turk type regards him. And why? Simply because the new Turk knows that it is only by the courage, the bravery and endurance of the old style Turk that they can ever expect to hold together even a semblance of their loosely united empire, which of itself only makes up a part of the Moslem world—a world which it is very hard for the Christian to understandfor when the whole story is told, instead of calling the Turk the 'Terrible Turk,' he may be, perhaps, called the 'Forgiving Turk.' "

"But why do you think that Turkey will join hands with

Germany and Austria?" asked Ward.

"Because Germany has been the godfather of Turkey. Perhaps had it not been for Germany, the Turk, as the sick man of the East, would have long ago been laid low and almost forgotten. But Dr. Germany stepped in, resuscitated him, showed him how to take care of himself, and is still his adviser; all, of course, because it suits Germany's policy against the Slavs so to do. Turkey's opponent is Russia, as the self-styled protector of the smaller Slav nations, which have grown up under Russian influence out of the dismembered parts of Turkey, while Germany is the Mussulman's protector."

"I suppose that it will take a war to ultimately establish

the political status of the Turkish people."

"Yes," confirmed O'Rourke. "And sometimes it seems to me as if Turkey would eventually prove to be the center from which would be drawn out the bloody circle of the wars of this century."

Athena gave a sigh of relief as the ship finally made its

way past the line of forts.

"Ah!" she exclaimed. "Now we are safe from the mines, are we not?"

"Yes," reassured O'Rourke. "I think we are, . . . in this direction. It is only a short run over to Varna. We will be there by dawn tomorrow, on what may prove to be one of the last ship's sailing on this line between Constantinople and Varna. Varna isn't much of a town, although at certain times of the year it is quite picturesque, with its prettily painted houses looking more attractive at a distance from the sea than from an actual visit through its untidy streets."

A wind came up laden with mist, and the passengers were driven down into the cabin, heavy with the odor of Turkish tobacco. O'Rourke spread a large map out on the table to explain to them the way they were to return to England.

"One might almost say," he remarked, as he pointed to the map, "that all the world is a stage of a military play and that every country furnishes the players and the scenery. This map only shows part of what is called the theater of war, for I might paraphrase Shakespeare's verse farther by saying that all the world's a war-stage. This map shows something of what is going on all the way from the battlefield in Flanders to the eastern battlefields on which Turkey will eventually prove, I am confident, an ally of the German-Austrians in Europe's great war."

"It seems a long way," said Ward, "back over what I

used to think were the little countries of Europe."

"Yes, for we have to cross Bulgaria to Rustchuk, then up to Budapest, then half a thousand miles up into Germany, through Austria, then almost as much again until we get to Holland or Denmark, and then on to England and home."

"And these eastern battlefields—shall we have to go through any of them?" asked Ward, anxiously looking at

Athena.

"Once beyond the Servian lines, I think that we will be able to go right straight on through to Austria and on to the Netherlands, . . . at least that is my program," and as he spoke the words he pursed his lips doubtfully.

And almost at that very moment one of the officers of

the ship came rushing down excitedly, a marconigram in his hand, for even that merchant craft had already been fitted out with wireless in anticipation of the war.

"It is the Jehad—the Jehad. It is the holy war. We have here our orders to hasten back directly from Varna

for our armament."

Athena grasped the arm of her father, while O'Rourke responded to their inquiring look by saying:

"The Jehad. It means war. It means the holy war. It

has caught us a little sooner than I had expected."

XX FROM VARNA TO RUSTCHUK

They wasted no time at Varna, hardly glancing at the town as they hastened from the steamer landing to the waiting train. Even the then still neutral Bulgaria felt some of the heat of the war flames in its own members, so lately withered by the battle fires of the Balkan struggle.

The news of the war had unexpectedly crowded the train, and they were thrust into a compartment with an old prophet-looking Turk and his four wives, who, all four after eyeing Athena for a long time, made, after the Eastern fashion, hospitable advances in offerings of fruits, flowers and sweetmeats.

Athena, in the companionship of the veiled women, overcame much of her excitement, for there was one among them whose dark eyes, looking out at Athena over her yakmash, showed a friendly sparkle. She spoke French, and the two were soon conversing together upon the topics which form a sisterhood from the divergent types of womankind.

O'Rourke had telegraphed ahead to Rustchuk asking that a boat be chartered for the party to make the trip up the Danube.

The great stretch of plains, deepening down towards the rugged mountain which, in the crisp November air took on a cold steel blue from the sky above, contrasting wildly with the browns and greens of the landscape, fascinated and held Athena during the half day's journey.

It was impossible for them to charter a boat at Rustchuk immediately, so O'Rourke proposed that they proceed over into that other still neutral country, Roumania, and to its capital, Bucharest, where better hotel accommodations could be secured than at Rustchuk during the two or three days they would have to wait until the steamer was chartered.

"Besides," explained O'Rourke, "we shall not have to return across the great width of the Danube here to Rustchuk, for we can have the steamer come directly on to

Giurgevo."

So to Roumania they went, over the wide sweeping plains, dotted with scattered villages of mournful peasants, in the

ever present tall Astrakhan hat of black.

There was nothing to hold them in Bucharest, although the hotel was passingly fair, but the weak imitation of French life ostentatiously displayed about them grated harshly and they were heartily glad when O'Rourke finally came and announced that they would immediately return to Rustchuk, where their chartered steamer awaited them.

When they boarded it, they were surprised at its spaciousness. It was an old affair, but still "river worthy"—as O'Rourke expressed it—a comfortable old boat, spacious cabins on the main deck with the engines well out of the way below, and the whole upper deck free and open for promenading and sightseeing.

The pick-up crew of neutrals had put the ship in a most clean and comfortable shape, and they all congratulated each other upon their good fortune. Athena's maid had stayed in Constantinople, and so a faithful Bulgarian woman, who had been in the French Capital with the embassy of her

country, took her place.

There was a piano aboard, which, although ancient, had been recently tuned—one of those sweet, old-time, melodious instruments, petted and coaxed out of wood and steel, by the deft fingers of a generation of master piano makers long

since passed away.

O'Rourke, who had never betrayed his musical knowledge on the yacht cruise, as soon as the craft was well steaming up the river, came down to the cabin, after making an inspection of the ship, and seating himself at the piano harmonized beautifully, thrilling Athena and her father with the beauty of his execution.

"How wonderful!" exclaimed Athena. "How can you do

it, and with so little practice?"

"Because I do not attempt things too difficult," he responded simply. "Now, here, for example, if I should attempt this Bach fugue you would see what a botch I would make of it," and running his fingers lightly through the prelude, he stopped abruptly.

"Oh, do please go on. You play it so wonderfully," she insisted. "I know it myself, and I can't hear or see anything amiss in it. Your touch and technique are exquisitely beau-

tiful."

Without further insistence, dreamily, as though to himself, he played on, sometimes in the climax of harmony, his nostrils dilating to the spell of the music, as with closed eyes he abandoned himself to the instrument's masterly control, which seemed to Athena to come from the spirit of some invisible genii passing on down through him as its conductor.

"Oh! Oh!" she exclaimed over and over again, unconscious of all in the thrall of the enjoyment. He finished and then turned to her abruptly. He did not seem surprised that

Athena's eyes were filled with tears.

"I was so hungry for music that I could not help it," he said. "Yes, hungry for music, it has been so long since I

have had any of any sort."

Athena came and sat down upon the bench like a pupil beside her master. Naturally he moved away slightly so that she might take her position farther to the right to allow him freedom in playing. The old man sank down into a fauteuil beside them, and with his hands on his knees, bowed his grey head, captivated by the charm of the music.

Then O'Rourke stopped abruptly, and said, looking at

Athena:

"I did so enjoy the Prince of Reisberg's singing on the yacht."

"Yes. But you—why did you not tell us of your wonder-

ful gift?"

"Gift, did you say?" he returned, and then as if embarrassed, arose and went on evasively:

"Ah, but you have yet to see the dining salon. I merely had a ten minutes' chat with the agent of the boat and he has certainly 'done himself proud'—to use our very American expression—in fitting things out for us."

The whole after-salon had been banked on either side with potted trees and ferns, with a lattice work above entwined with growing vines, and beneath this, in the very center, a strangely unusual triangular table had been built, with its angles curved off and hidden with banks of roses whose ivory yellow and blushing red were reflected from the costly and

expensive service of crystal and Bohemian ware.

"Oh, how lovely!" exclaimed Athena. "It makes me hungry just to look at anything so beautiful, particularly since I really haven't had a good meal since we left our yacht," and Athena assumed such a mock expression of misery that both men laughed heartily; she, herself, joining in the merriment.

"Well, your appetite, no matter how dainty or hearty, will, I am sure, be gratified in every whim," declared O'Rourke, "for when I mentioned the necessity of a good chef to the agent, he told me that he could obtain a real Turkish chef, a little old, but whose like he had never known. As master of ceremonies, I went down to interview him a while ago and I can assure you from his commissary and kitchen and from his eagerness to please, we shall not go hungry, even though we may be the most exacting of epicures. When will you be ready to dine?"

Each one looked at the other hungrily, but even from their informal American standpoint it seemed a pity to the three of them to spoil the beauty of the whole effect by not being thoroughly conventional. So the men understood and smiled when Athena said:

"Say, half an hour from now. That will give us time to change."

They went to their cabins, and were even before the time appointed, gathered again in the dining salon; Athena radiant and beautiful in a simple frock with a corsage bouquet; the Colonel and O'Rourke in dinner coats of the easy American cut, the Colonel still wearing the old shoe string bow tie of ante-bellum days.

What a trio that was! Such a menu it would be hard to produce anywhere! The great chefs say that they never care to cook a dinner for more than four, and perhaps it might have been the discount of the allowance that brought out from this particular Turkish chef the wonderful toothsomeness of every dish.

The soup, daintily served in double-handed deep cups, was light and clear, with a pungent taste that edged their hunger on followed the cocktail of clams; then the fish, bursting open like popcorn at the slightest touch beneath its deliciously

sauced skin; then a leg of mutton, fresh from the plains of Roumania, with salads culled that very morning from a sunny recess of the hillsides; following floated in a dessert of "Turkish delight" pudding, as pleasing to the eye as it was toothsome to the palate, and afterwards that rarety of all good things: a demi-tasse of Turkish coffee, or just a tasse, if you will, for every Turkish tasse of coffee is a demi-tasse.

"No wines necessary to digest such good cooking as this,

is there?" commented Ward.

"No," responded O'Rourke, "and you have just struck upon a point, which proves the contention I have made ever since you sent me to the Academy, that the best remedy against alcoholism is good cooking. A good square meal, taken just when a man feels like going on a spree will always cause him to hold back."

They talked and conversed long at the table, going back over the memories of their cruise, the Colonel and Athena in turns expressing regret in not having news from the Duchess, Cornelia or Coste, nor from the Prince. Upon all of which O'Rourke made no comment, until, when they had finished, he remarked:

"I am quite sure that we shall meet Haiden before we get out of Austria, and, in fact, even before we get well into it, for I was only waiting for a chance to tell you that it is upon the Prince that I am most particularly counting. . . . For it is he who will get us our safe-conduct through the lines. You see," he continued, as they looked at him expectantly. "The Prince has been in action with his regiment—, went into action just before he got me my—, my—," he stammered at the thought that he had almost divulged that Haiden had obtained his release from the prison where the instigation of Magnus had thrust him as a spy suspect, but in a moment he added:

"Just before I came to join you at Constantinople."

He paused with a breath of relief and then continued:

"The Prince greatly distinguished himself; in fact, so much so that on the sheer merit as a strategist, young as he is, he was made a brigade commander, for he practically saved the Austrians by his skill and bravery from being outflanked by the Russians."

"Have you seen him? Have you met him?" asked Athena, trying to cover her interest.

"I have received a letter from him and talked to him by

long distance, just before I left for Constantinople and as he came down from the Vistula. He was over a hundred miles away from me then. But even as he talked I could hear the booming of the cannon through the telephone, but he told me if—, if—, if he could be of any assistance, just through what channels I would be able to reach him."

"Ah. Then we shall see him soon!" exclaimed Athena. "Yes," returned O'Rourke slowly, avoiding her gaze, and then with an effort again repeated, "Yes—, if—, if—"...

"Of course," blurted out Ward, "a soldier's life is always

uncertain. I understand."

"What! Do you mean that he may be killed?" queried Athena.

"Oh, he told me that they were well entrenched and advancing entirely under cover. . . . He is a very brave man, and would never hesitate to die, . . . if needs be, bravely."

He paused, conscious that his last remark had an in-

coherence in it which did not express his thought.

The two looked at him gravely, but lightly gathering up a rose, he breathed its fragrance for a moment and then said:

"I think it would be better if we would, for the time being, not discuss the other members of our pleasant cruise. We have a long trip before us, and much else to occupy our minds. It may seem puerile of me to make this request."

"Not at all. Not at all," asserted Ward, but Athena

tipped her chin in rebellious disapproval.

The steamer, in spite of its age, was making good time, steadying up against the current of the wide Danube, which,

every hour gathered nearer on its shores.

As they strolled about in the spaciousness of the promenade deck the interest of the journey grew upon Athena. To her, it was not at that point the blue Danube, nor to any one else, except the composer of the famous waltz. But to Athena, as to all others, the charm of the Danube did not lie in its wide waters, but in the novelty of its landscapes and the strange picturesqueness of those villages of Eastern life, which dotted its banks and which always fascinate the eyes of the denizen of the West. Of course, on their private chartered steamer, she saw nothing of the cosmopolitan passenger life to be found nowhere more novel than on the packet boats on the Danube. But she saw Semendra seeming almost as Turkish and Eastern as the villages they left behind, with its well-built stone quays and banks beyond, planted with trees that finally con-

verged into a public recreation park. The great line of castelated and pinnacled towers, with its immense fortress still intact in spite of the ravages of time and siege and battle, alone spoke to her of war, for in the comfort and ease of their own steamer, they knew naught of what was taking place on about and beyond them. The flat-growing bushes and full heather and yellow grass on the Hungarian-Servian banks, with trees waving their branches over the water upon the pebbled beach, bore in the very aspect of their monotony and isolation, as she thought, an assurance of peace.

Yes, to her it was a voyage of peace. Even the Bulgarian banks charmed her with their dusty bluffs and hills. To her it was a voyage towards the only secure land she knew: her own America. And so thinking she fell asleep to the full, heavy rhythm of the engines, little thinking of what the morning

would bring.

XXI IN THE GREY OF MORNING

The morning was grey and misty. The trees, on the low banks on either side as they steamed ahead, stretched out their leafless branches like skeletons. The three, enveloped in their heavy coats, stood watching from the upper deck.

Suddenly, as the steamer took its course nearer towards one of the banks, O'Rourke pointed. From somewhere beyond, an outline like the spiny back of a gigantic porcupine appeared, crawling along the bank. As they looked the spines became rifles length and then they saw that it was a regiment of infantry. Two or three figures towered up higher than the others; they were the field officers on horseback. Suddenly they heard a command coming faint over the still water and the column stopped; the rifle lines dropped, and a voice came calling to them,—a gruff, heavy, military voice—bellowing out from hands placed before the mouth as a megaphone:

"What flag?"

The boat steamed farther out into the muddy waters. Again the voice called, and then another likewise. They could hear lower tones of command, and then,—then fire crashed out from the bank through the grey of the morning. . . . There

was a crash of glass as the bullets spit through the windows. "Full steam ahead and away!" cried out O'Rourke to the Captain at the wheel, as he hurried Athena and her father behind the protection of the funnel.

Again and again the volleys reddened out towards them,

until finally the banks disappeared in the mist.

"A pretty mess," remarked O'Rourke, after the firing had ceased. "There is no other way but to press ahead. To stop at any but principal ports where there is a staff headquarters would mean continual detention and dangerous arrest on the part of these patrol companies whose commanders have no authority to do anything but to refer prisoners to headquarters. I will report this matter to Belgrade, with the request that the company commanders patroling the banks no longer fire upon us, for there is not another steamer on the river like this and it is easily identified as neutral."

They came to Belgrade; its buildings rising up one upon the other from the water line, and all surmounted by the high belfry of the Greek church, the whole making a gloomy, dismal scene, relieved only by a wooded stretch on the hillside

and a few low growing cypress beneath.

"The most wretched capital in Europe," remarked O'Rourke, "and barbaric in memory, although in the summer time there is much of attractiveness in the country about. As soon as I have established our credentials for the continu-

ation of the voyage we will proceed."

There was anchored well up in the Danube above Belgrade, an Austrian monitor gunboat, trim and natty, its white lines gracefully marking the yellow water and its long guns gaping from their white turrets toward the Semlin bridge, which linked Servia to Hungary, where the river Save pounded its dark waters into the yellow, writhing body of the Danube. Again O'Rourke reported to headquarters and again their steamer was cleared.

For hours they sailed between the monotonous river banks, here and there a village of a few houses, with a few sickly trees beyond and a half dozen straggling oar boats before. They were still heading rapidly up the stream; the three in their chairs, reading and chatting in quiet enjoyment, with no thought of further danger, when, without warning, something crashed through the steamer, shaking it from stem to stern.

The men jumped to their feet in consternation. Just away

from the village which they had last passed, and on a hilly bank above it, appeared the wheels of sheltered field gun carriages, with their limbers placed beside them.

O'Rourke, braving the danger of another artillery shot, or possible rifle fire, ran to the stern of the steamer, crying

out in German:

"We are peaceful Americans! We are neutral! Do not fire!" using his hands as a megaphone, but again and again shells tore through the steamer, splintering the woodwork and making the tiniest splinter a dangerous weapon.

All was confusion; the crew running hither and thither;

some jumping into the waters of the river.

O'Rourke rushed up on the Captain's bridge. Fortunately just beyond them the Danube in its turning had left a high promontory jutting out into its waters and could they pass beyond it they would be sheltered from the murderous fire.

"We are lost! We are lost!" cried the Captain. "They will never stop firing until they have killed and sunk us all."

But O'Rourke, calmly pointing at the promontory, quieted his fears and urged him on in the performance of his duties.

The change of the steamer's course seemed to trouble the gunners in the range finding. The engines were still untouched, and with every pound of steam they shot ahead, only one shell reaching them after they had gone beyond the promontory and to safety.

"The Servian gunners are a pretty wild lot," remarked O'Rourke, reassuringly. "Nobody seems to have been killed or wounded. Now, all we have to do is to put out the fire. Send one of your men with me who understands the pumps and I will fight the fire while you push ahead," he commanded the Captain. "Keep well out in midstream or we may again run into one of these unpleasant little batteries."

The deck below was a shambles. The red flames of the fire, feeding upon the oil of the storeroom, licking up greedily

over the splintered wood.

After restoring reason to the minds of the crazed crew, O'Rourke had the pumps manned and bravely they fought against the flames, shooting ton after ton of water over the fire, which, at last, they seemed to vanquish.

But a new danger threatened them and O'Rourke was the

first to see it.

"Stop, men," he cried. "Although we are putting out the fire, we are sinking the boat by the weight of the water. Wait

until the pumps have lightened the ship. Then we will again commence."

But no sooner had they stopped throwing water upon the flames than they again licked upward through the black smoke, and O'Rourke perceived that the steamer was doomed—doomed to a quick destruction.

"Man the boats," he cried, running along the deck, looking into each boat, to see its condition, and finally selecting the one which he thought best suited for saving Athena and

her father.

Within a quarter of an hour the whole stern of the ship was a mass of flames and the crew, with the life boats before them on the deck and all belted with life preservers, were pushing up, foot by foot, towards the bow as the licking tongues of fire viciously lunged and spit out at them. But still the engines worked on; the mechanical life of the ship still pulsated, although the engineers and firemen and stokers long since had fled from it.

Suddenly there was an angry rasping gasp, as from the throat of a giant, and the flames shot even higher upward, belching forth like the crater of a volcano. Then—, . . . the engines stopped—, the burning ship swung lengthwise in the stream, balanced itself against the current for a moment and drifted back down and shoreward.

"To the boats! To the boats!" cried O'Rourke, hurrying Athena and her father down into the one he had prepared, and with a couple of picked men, they were soon rapidly rowing away from the burning steamer, from which rolled up-

ward great clouds of black smoke.

As they looked they heard a crack, and one of the rowers fell over backwards with a piece of broken oar in his hand. The boat, swinging around, moved by a counter current, followed down the river at an angle that would bring it up against the burning vessel.

Closer and closer they found themselves drifting towards the seething, flaming mass. Already they could feel the hot puff of the fire upon their cheeks. But O'Rourke said reassuringly, as he stood up with hands outstretched to balance

the boat:

"Do not be afraid, for there is still plenty of time and our

life preservers will save us."

He moved over to the stern and set the remaining oar in the sculling notch, and at the same time giving the flaming mass, that was now bearing down directly upon them, a disturbed glance that belied his comforting words of reassurance.

For he knew that the danger was imminent, that it would be only a matter of a few moments before the boilers exploded and the whole river would be covered with the flames from the dismembered vessel, vomiting out the fire of its own destruction.

XXII NEW ARMY ROADS

How O'Rourke ever managed to force the rowboat back from the burning steamer he could never have explained. But when the explosion did take place they were far enough away to suffer no damage other than from a fire brand which slight-

ly burned O'Rourke.

"There could hardly have been a more desolate place selected by Providence to land on," remarked O'Rourke, good naturedly, as he helped Athena and her father up the muddy bank and looked back at the thinning clouds of smoke that rose from the broken but still burning parts of the steamer. "The boat itself will do us little good because with one oar we could never stem this current, and to go down stream would mean another reception from our Servian friends, who, evidently, are some poorly officered men who have not yet learned that everyone they see and don't know is not an enemy."

He turned and scanned the horizon, putting his hands up

to his eyes in search of a possible farm or fisher house.

"I am glad that I happened to think of getting some things together in the boat," he remarked. "Here, I will bail it out, and pull it up high beyond the water. Then if you will make yourself as comfortable as you can for awhile, I will go over beyond that high hill where possibly we can find someone who will aid us. Fortunately, we are well supplied with money, for that is an item, too, which I didn't happen to forget in the hurry of the breakaway."

He looked up and down the stream and across to the other

bank.

"Have no fear of more guns," he said reassuringly. "We

are in a desolate and uninhabited district as far as I can see. All the other members of the crew have evidently drifted way on farther down the stream. Poor devils, I hope that none of them are lost. We must, as soon as possible, make some provision to reward them. It was one of the closest calls I ever had."

"Yes," commended Ward, his philanthropic interest awakened. "Yes, we must see every man in the steamer is well

compensated."

"Of course, the Servian government is liable to them for damages as well as for the loss of the steamer," said O'Rourke. "Hello! What have we here?" he cried, looking off at some distance beyond the bank.

He pointed below him where they saw that the ground, for yards of width, had been beaten down hard by the wide tires of heavy vehicles, where not cut up by the tramp of men's feet and horses' hoofs. In a minute he was over the bank examining the strange road and looking up and down its

whole length.

"There has been a large armed force passing over here, and it is they who have made this fresh road," exclaimed O'Rourke. "See! There are the heavy wheel tracks of the artillery. There must have been a dozen batteries at least and then there, see! it would take several regiments of cavalry to chop up the ground that way, and on either side you see where the infantry, in route order, has stamped down the grass and cut up its own lighter roads. Evidently quite a little army," he smiled grimly, "and all hustling along to get into action, I should say, by the way they all kept their positions in the march. . . Ah, if I only knew whether they were Austrians or Servians," he mused, and explained as he looked down at the roads.

"You see, if we were to fall into the hands of the Servians it would mean that for a considerable time we will have to turn our backs to the way we are going. Now, if this armed force which passed this way was Austrian, whatever did happen to us would bring us nearer to Budapest and from that city we could make our way over to the rest of Hungary, then Austria and Germany. Ah! Wait a moment," he exclaimed, as an idea occurred to him. "I am quite familiar with the uniform and other equipment of European armies, and since it very rarely happens that a march of such a number of men as this goes far without one of the soldiers losing or

throwing away something, perhaps I may identify them. . . . Then if they are Austrians, we will follow, for those roads certainly were made not more than a few hours ago. I should say that there were Germans in command, for the German officers never allow any straggling. But if I should find that they are Servians, then, of course, we would have to find some other way to get up into the Austrian lines."

Taking off his jacket, he threw it into the boat and smilingly waved to them as he started off at a rapid pace down the

road, looking to the right and left.

The two watched him anxiously as he wound around a knoll separating him for a time from their view; but he finally reappeared in the distance beyond, pushing rapidly ahead over the plain, and then upwards on a long sloping hill, covered with wood, in which he was finally lost.

"Daughter, will you ever forgive me for getting you into such a dreadful predicament?" asked Ward tenderly, as he

drew Athena closer to him on the seat of the boat.

"Oh, father," she returned. "For myself I fear nothing, but to think that again you should be the victim of such circumstances. How is it possible for such things to happen? Why, I wouldn't believe them if I read them in a book."

The old man smiled grimly.

"Yes, the last month has been pretty full of adventures, hasn't it? But I am sure that our troubles are nearly at an end, for I have confidence in O'Rourke's ability to pull us

through."

Time and again the old man walked up the bank, scanning the length of the military road to see if there were any signs of the return of O'Rourke. But the weary monotonous roll of plain and hill stretched out before him without a living creature to be seen. Then suddenly from out of the woods a figure on a horse appeared, hedged about by men who walked with the trained precision of soldiers.

He watched them eagerly as they came on back down over the road, until finally he could make out the line of their rifles, and as they came nearer, he distinguished their faces. With his eyes fixed upon the advancing men, he searched eagerly for O'Rourke, but O'Rourke was not among them.

XXIII DOWN THE ROAD

Ward, giving his arm to his daughter, considered that the only thing to do would be to advance towards the armed force

to avoid any possible chance of being fired upon.

The men, under a command from the officer on horseback, spread themselves out away from the middle of the road, down which came the solitary mounted figure, capped and uniformed in the only half concealed colors of the Austrian uniform.

"An American just detained in our camp beyond has reported your presence here," remarked the officer, as he finally came up, saluting curtly, yet with deference. "I am sorry that we have no means of conveyance for the lady," and he glanced long and admiringly at Athena, whose soft hair, loosened in the excitement, enframed her classic face, pink cheeked with excitement. "But our military saddles are quite easy riding sidewise," he continued, "and if the lady will accept my mount, we will immediately go to rejoin your companion at headquarters."

He dismounted and with the aid of a couple of soldiers, Athena was seated in the saddle sidewise and they started back, the soldiers carrying the food and provisions away from

the boat.

"Do you smoke?" asked Ward, in his hospitable way, tendering him a cigar. "I am sorry that the wrapper is somewhat broken."

The officer, with a brisk "Thank you," longingly reached for the cigar and was soon puffing away deep in the content of the Havana's enjoyment.

"We are glad that you speak English," remarked Ward.

The officer, throwing back his cap and eyeing the cigar with

critical delight, puffed out a cloud of smoke.

"Yes, the German officer part of our army has to learn English as well as French," and then apparently fearing that he might be engaged in a conversation which would give unwarranted information, he remained almost gloomily silent. But he was young and the episode of meeting a distinguishedlooking American, who was the father of such a beautiful daughter, together with the companionable effect of a cigar, put him in a very receptive mood for questioning.

"What is the news of the war?" asked Ward.

"Very favorable, of course," the officer responded. "And as far as this country is concerned, it will be still more favorable in a day or so, for we will have them on the run before a second sun-rise."

"What?" asked Ward. "Do you mean that you are about

to go into battle?"

"Assuredly and confidentially," returned the officer.

"What provision can I make for the safety of my daugh-

ter?" asked Ward anxiously.

"Oh, we will take care of that," he returned nonchalantly. "I was thinking as I came down to get you that I would be happy if I was as sure of getting home in a year as you will be in a month."

The officer heaved a sigh; then suddenly stiffening himself, he gave a sharp command upon which several of the men took their places behind Ward, while he, striding at the head of the column, put himself away from the further temptation to talk.

XXIV A VOICE FROM THE GROUND

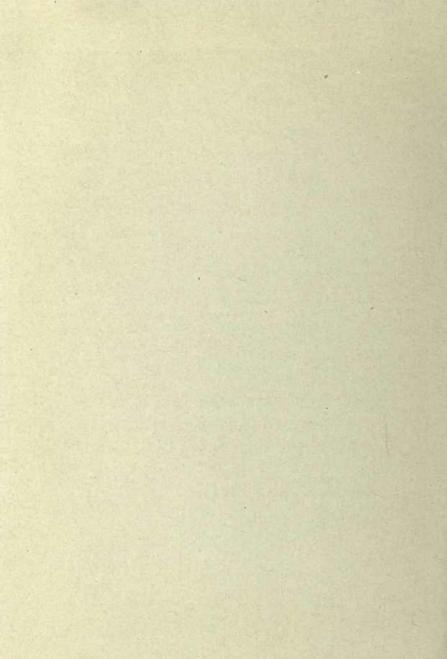
When they had gone up over the wooded hillside, they were surprised to see the vast concourse of men encamped below and beyond them; the smoke of fires rising up white and grey above the widely extended groups of soldiers gathered about them.

The men were resting—sitting or lying about their stackedup arms; some nervously chatting, a few trying to joke, but most of them waiting in silence—waiting for the battle to commence before the day was done. To Athena there was a sinister and doomed-like expression everywhere; even the pack horses standing up in the midst of the resting infantry, held their tails dog-like between their legs as if they, too, feared the end of the waiting.

Beyond where the infantry lay, up on the slopes toward the mountains, the stubbled fields showed russet, and some of



"Then the whole world grew red and black before her and the earth sank and rose in the thunder of the battle. She wondered why they still bothered with those tiny sabers and rifles when the



the trees still wore their autumn leaves, brown and crackling in the clearness of the frosty air. The white outline of a humble farm dwelling showed itself among the trees, a picture of comfort and industry, which brought to the minds of the waiting soldiers, as Athena imagined, the poignant prick of homesickness.

O'Rourke, in the company of an officer, was waiting for them at the edge of the woods, and together they went up to the staff headquarters.

Squatting around the fire were the orderlies, who jumped to attention when a middle-aged officer passed, to whom Athena and her father were brought and who proved to be the commander.

He leaned back against a tree and listened while O'Rourke told the story. He was tired and weary, and his face reflected the strain of responsibility and the debauchery of sleeplessness. His uniform, though carefully brushed, showed the rough usage of the field, and Athena noticed that the gold embroidery of his collar was turned over and broken.

He gritted his teeth when O'Rourke told how they had

been fired upon, and the steamer shelled and destroyed.

"Yes!" he exclaimed. "That is the warfare of those cursed Serbs. Warfare against the neutral and the defenseless; but they shall be punished. They shall be punished."

He pulled out a cigarette case and after tendering it to the others, took one, lit it slowly, and then smoked in quick short

puffs.

"I am sorry that I cannot send you right on homeward; but we shall need all our horses and autos today; however, I am sure that if you will have patience until after the battle that with what we take from the enemy there will still be transportation provided for you."

Ward wondered at the calm deliberation of this commanding general; at his audacity in forecasting for himself such an

easy and speedy victory.

"Yes," continued the general, "at all events we can send

you along with the wounded."

He turned and ordered that coffee be brought to them, offered his coat to Athena to sit upon, and while they continued engaged in conversation, a voice, speaking apparently from the ground, in a deep gutteral German, came to them, hoarse and rasping. It was a strange hollow toned voice, yet so peremptory and commanding that even

Athena stood up impulsively, and looking down a few feet beyond her, saw a man flat on the ground, with his ear to a telephone receiver.

He was only a common soldier, with the cheaper uniform and accounterments of an enlisted man, but what he said shot a new life into the wearied face of the general, who rushed forward with a quick command which came snapping back to him from among the half dozen officers who likewise sprang away at the order.

Jumping into his saddle, the general called to O'Rourke

and his party:

"I will send back a guard to care for you," then digging his spurs into his horse, he plunged down through the camp which, as by magic, became the scene of the greatest confusion, but which, after a few moments, resolved itself into compact bodies of men and horses and field pieces grimly prepared for the battle.

"Evidently they have decoyed the enemy into this position and are ready for them," remarked O'Rourke, his face showing the excited pleasure of a soldier's instinct in the face of battle. "You will be perfectly safe here. I—, I think I will go forward with them to watch what is hap-

pening."

He was gone before Athena could utter a cry of protest. . . . Already she heard the boom of cannon, first far away, and then answered back by the crash of the Austrian pieces. Then to the noise was added the din of machine guns and crack of musketry—, all in one head racking racket that kept up eternally. She was hardly conscious of all that was going on about her. Her time-sense was all gone. It only seemed a few minutes and yet the whole scene was a matter of hours, with so many dreadful details that she only had a passing cognizance of them as they flew along like a dusty, biting wind-, just a fleeting glimpse of a part of a single happening at a time. . . . But she remembered cursing men, working at cannon stuck in the road; the lashing of horses madly straining at their harness-, the rumble of rattling limbers-, men wounded dropping down with their hands to their bodies and some with their heads streaming with blood, unmindful of the horses about them, although threatening to plunge upon them under the cruel lashings. . . . Then she would catch the glimpse of flashing swords and sharp edged whips, which cut into the flesh of the frightened beasts and gasping men, while all the while shells were bursting and guns shook the ground with a deafening roar, amid yells, curses and piteous calls. . . . The shells were not as Athena had imagined them to be, breaking straight out in all directions like rockets in mid air, but shells that shot out like a broken pin wheel's sharp and fiery edge, glowing in the daylight and whose separate pieces dropped like molten iron from the sky upon the bloody earth, areek with the poison of lyddite gases.

In the confusion, she found herself. with her father, standing on the hillside, held spell-bound by a tossing mass that came on like the regular roll of a wave—a wave of men and beasts in a calvary charge, without a break in the line of horses' heads and men's bodies. Then suddenly there was a deafening crash, . . . the ground trembled, and the sky groaned; the trees staggered before her, and when she looked again she saw that the wave had been broken and that it had become nothing but a seething mass of men and beasts; of blanket rolls and taut drawn bridles; of bent hodies and the faces of terrified men, and horses in all positions of straining agony; arms upraised and lances thrown down, a strange, hideous upheaval that staggered and tumbled about, routed and disordered, struggling to break back upon itself while all the while the shrapnel rained its iron hail of death upon those struggling men and beasts.

Then the world grew red and black before her and the earth sunk and rose in the thunder of the battle. She wondered why they still bothered with those tiny swords and rifles when the big guns were bringing the very heavens down upon them.

There was a lull. . . . Everything seemed blurred and confused. All the trees seemed either on fire or smouldering upward; the branches curling aloft like smoke, and the wavering landscape splotched with men, horses or cannon danced before her fainting senses, like the spread of a bloody blotch. To her it was the wildest vertigo of a hideous night mare.

Then finally she remembered, and things became quieter, and her father's face at length appeared more clearly before her. . . . Puzzled she looked up at the high trunks of the trees around which, about a man's height, green painted

canvas had been stretched to screen them from aeroplane observation. She reached out as in a dream, put her hands slowly on her father's shoulder and looked into his eyes without even the strength to whisper a word, and although she knew that he was very close to her, his voice came from afar—, from very far away—, as he said:

"It is over, daughter. The battle is over. The Servians have been driven off, and we are now safe back here in

headquarters."

XXV WITH THE WOUNDED

Then the red stream commenced to pour in. At first Athena absolutely refused to occupy a place in one of the automobiles, saying that she would rather walk than deprive a wounded man of his right, but when she was shown that they, the wounded, would all be cared for, she finally consented, and they were driven twenty miles away to the nearest railway from where, after a long night and day's journey, but in comparative comfort, they came to Budapest, whence the voyage to Vienna was easily accomplished.

A munition train had held them up for nearly half a day in a little village or rather what the war had left of it. They strolled about among the ruins. The village had been deserted—apparently there was not one inhabitant left—but as they came through to a garden on the other side of the long line of broken walls—they heard the cry of a babe coming from the depths of a cellar and beneath the trees beyond saw a peasant woman, her face swollen with weeping, tenderly laying out the infant's wash. They stopped and talked with her, and Ward, when he was shown the grave where the father of the babe had been buried but a few days before—shot to death in defending his home—, gave her all the money he had with him.

As they went back there was deep emotion in Ward's voice when he said:

"Oh! The grief of that peasant mother. It is such as she who alone repair the ravages of war. With her face still swollen with weeping she turns from her soldier's grave to the cradle of his child, knowing that the diaper of today will change to war's death shroud tomorrow."

And no one smiled at his reference to the diaper.

The first thing that O'Rourke did at Vienna was to get in communication with the Prince. . . . He was overjoyed to find that he would have an immediate opportunity of seeing Haiden, who, having been wounded in the hottest part of the Eastern campaign, was confined to a convent hospital but three hours by express from Vienna.

Ward and Athena gladly agreed to proceed to Berlin by a route which allowed them to stop off and see the Prince.

They came to the old hillside convent, now all converted into a hospital, and went into the refectory which served as a waiting room, where visitors could meet those of the wounded able to receive callers. They hardly recognized the Prince as he came in supported by an orderly, so thin and emaciated was he, his closely cropped hair sharpening the strength of his features. He walked slowly, advancing step by step with painful effort. . . . As he came, a whisper from one of the nurses betrayed his identity, and it went about from one to another around the great room. silently gazed towards him-nurses, patients, visitors-all looked towards the slender form, with the princely bearing, even though coming forward on a crutch.

"The Prince of Reisberg. The Prince of Reisberg. . . . The brave defender from the front," the words still went

whispering around the room.

As he came out of the aisle, Athena, her father and O'Rourke stood waiting to receive him. His face was very pale, heightened by the crimson collar of his dressing gown, whose tasseled belt swung back and forth as he came forward.

He hobbled over on his crutch, disengaged one hand that he might reach it out to them, and looking long and deeply at Athena, he said:

"I am glad that you have come. You are among the first that I have seen."

They stood before a fireplace, upon whose shelf was a bank of flowers. His nostrils dilated as he turned for a moment and breathed in their fragrance.

"It seems good to be alive," he remarked. "To be alive and still have one's senses—, all of them—, all five—, to

enjoy the whole beauty of life."

They were silent, for they understood as they looked about and saw the wounded, bandaged heads, robbed of one.

and sometimes two of those precious senses.

"There is so much that I want to hear from each one of you," remarked the Prince, in the same sweet, musical voice, though it was more measured and settled now. "You are like medicine to me—, medicine that comes from the pleasant remembrances of the past. And I need medicine," he continued, "for I want to be healed quickly that I may go back to the command."

"What!" exclaimed Athena. "Would you ever think of returning to fight again? To again fight when you have

already been so grievously wounded?"

The Prince looked at her. Then he held his brow higher. There was a cold gleam in his eyes and his voice came intoned like the crack of a command:

"I will never be happy until Germany's enemies are crushed. Why should I not fight as long as life is left me?"

As he spoke, Athena drew back, for it seemed as though something cruel had stamped itself on that noble face. The eyes no longer gleamed out the soft ecstacy of the poet. The close cropped hair showed straight up, convict-like, over his high brow and his glance was that of a challenging sentry ready to fire.

She saw and was horrified, for with her woman's instinct, she divined the reason, although still unwilling to believe. Long she gazed into his face, gathering every detail of the firmly pressed lips, and the hard passive immobile cast of that countenance which, before, had been to her lighted with the full courage of the highest thoughts of the Master.

She wondered if it were true that they had ever stood

together in the garden.

She bowed her head to shut out the transformation of the man. She wondered and then reflected with a shudder:

"'Tis this war—, this brutal war—, and the blood that he has shed and given which has changed him. It is the penalty of warfare racked through his mind and body, robbing him of his calm content."

Ward looked at his daughter and read in her eyes the story of her awakening, and in the embarrassed moment which followed, said:

"We have brought some flowers for our friend. Shall I go and have the man bring them?"

"Yes," responded Athena, and glad at the opportunity to get away, added:

"I will go with you."

When they had gone the Prince drew O'Rourke aside and whispered:

"And this Magnus-why has he come along with the

party?"

"Magnus?" exclaimed O'Rourke in a tone full of surprise. "Magnus? Why, I have heard nothing of him since he left Constantinople absconding with the money of Mr. Ward, and even having his yacht commandeered, after he had put me in the prison from which you released me."

The Prince's face took on a troubled, puzzled look.

"But he is here," he asserted. "He is here now, waiting to see me, for see, he has sent in his card. . . . It came at the same time as yours, but I could hardly believe that you could really be together. The scoundrel!" he continued clinching his crutch under his arm. "On my first visit to headquarters I will have him punished for your wicked arrest as well as that of the Count."

The two had drawn aside into a lobby to free the passageway for the visitors coming and going. At length they stood quite alone, with the door ajar, concealing them from observation without.

Suddenly the door opened wider and the two started back as a ponderous figure, the great form of Magnus himself stood before them. . . . He was in a field service uniform as an Austrian colonel and his cloak thrown back over his shoulders broadened his massive chest with its lines of shining buttons and golden braid. His service cap was fitted down over his head, giving him a war-like, martial appearance. After the first few steps forward, he stood gazing at the Prince. Then his eyes shot out toward O'Rourke as if not understanding the reason of his presence, . . . and he threw his legs somewhat apart as though preparing to ward off a blow in his own defense. His hand fell upon his sabre. . . . It jangled harshly and there was defiance in his eyes as he still gazed towards O'Rourke. The Prince, straightening up with the quickness of a panther, crashed his crutch down over the head of Magnus, and sent him reeling to the floor, the door slamming behind him in his fall as he struck against it.

"By God. I'll flay you, you reptile! You dare to face

me?" and infuriated with the sight of the blood streaming from the face of Magnus, he struck at him again and again.

Magnus raised himself up on one elbow, and took the blows as they came without flinching, with not a motion in his own defense, until raising his eyes, as the Prince regained his balance, he said in a tone which came to O'Rourke like a sob:

"It is well—strike. The punishment is just." "What!" cried the Prince. "You confess?"

Magnus let his face drop down upon his arm, his sabre gleaming out before him, spotted with his own spattered blood. He looked upwards towards the Prince long and steadfastly—, an appeal of tenderness welling up with the tears in his eyes—, tenderness such as one would never look for in his cruel features, tenderness such as came in the dream smile that flitted over his face as he slept on the way to Vienna.

"Yes," he murmured in a choked voice. "Yes, I confess—, I confess," the voice sounded deep and despairing,

and then rose like a prayer for forgiveness.

"Yes. I confess that I am thy father—thy father who, though unworthy of his son, loves thee."

XXVI A FATHER'S LOVE

Athena and her father never knew anything of the story that the Prince confided to O'Rourke after Magnus had gone; in fact; the whole affair had happened so quickly that they never knew that Magnus had come, although they wondered, when they returned with the flowers, why the Prince and O'Rourke should have kept them waiting so long.

It was only after O'Rourke had escorted Ward and his daughter back to the hotel that he, returning to sit by the hospital cot of the Prince, heard in a low whispered voice, sometimes broken by the excitement and weakness of exertion, the story which had finally found its climax that day in the first conscious meeting of father and son.

"Our nobility must seem a peculiar thing to you Ameri-

cans," confided the Prince. "I don't suppose that in your country such a thing as a man going a whole life time without actually knowing his own father could ever happen. . . . But, you see, my mother experienced something which rarely occurs among us—, an elopement," he sighed. . . . "She ran away with my father, a young Austrian lieutenant, who, although of a noble family himself, was not, by my grandparents, considered in her category. . . . So they separated them, even before I was born and I grew up, never knowing and never really thinking that I needed a father. My mother, as the only child, of course made me the heir to the Principality, and it was only when I was out of the University and an officer in the army, that I heard from my grandfather's own lips how my father was not dead, as I had supposed, but was still lingering around the Court of Vienna and, as my grandfather put it, 'did not enjoy a noble's good reputation.' . . . So although I knew that my father was living, I was much ashamed of him, and always dreaded meeting him or knowing anything about him."

He turned wearily over on his pillow and said, as though to himself:

"But I am sorry—, now I am sorry that I struck him. . . . I would never have done it had I known."

O'Rourke hardly knew what to say. It all seemed to be so incredible. There was nothing with which he could compare it in his whole adventurous life. . . .

The Prince reached over and picked up one of the long stemmed roses from the night table by his side—, one of the roses which Athena had brought him.

Deeply he breathed in the fragrance, and as his eyes slowly opened, O'Rourke saw the sweet radiant light of the

poet again showing from their depths.

"Ah, I understand it all now," said the Prince dreamily. "It comes to me as deep as the color and the fragrance of this rose. I know why now—, my—, my—, father sought the Albanian throne for me. It was to right a wrong —a wrong which he had done my mother and a wrong which he has done to himself all these years—, a wrong which he thought he could right in an exercise of a father's love."

"You are right—you are right," said O'Rourke, deeply moved by the mental attitude expressed in the language and manner of the Prince. "And after all," he added, encour-

agingly, "your—, your father has not harmed any one very much, for the money lost by Colonel Ward of course means nothing to him, and the other injustice was corrected."

"It is kind of you," returned the Prince. "Do you know, all these years I have apotheosized the love of mother for child, but I never knew before of this great love of father

for son."

The words were spoken so tenderly—so sweetly that they harmonized, it seemed to O'Rourke, with the color and fragrance of the roses as the Prince gathered them slowly up over his breast. Tears came to the eyes of both, when O'Rourke said:

"Yes, but it is in the Bible. It is in the Bible—that story of a father's love for his son."

XXVII TO NEUTRAL LAND

It was getting well along towards the Christmas tide; the season of "peace on earth," but war was raging on the battlefield in Flanders, on the front of Alsace-Lorraine at the approaches of Cracow and way down and up the hundreds of miles of battle front stretched out in the campaigns of the East and the West.

But to Athena and her father everything seemed in Germany itself almost about as usual; the trains ran on schedule time; the hotels and restaurants, shops and factories were all open, and they never could have believed that they were in the bumper land of the world's great war had it not been for the occasional march of troops to the front or a train full of wounded littered back home.

But one day while Athena and her father and O'Rourke were looking down from the hotel window into the court beneath, they saw an old German type seated at an iron table eagerly scanning a paper. Suddenly he dropped it to the ground and sat with face set firm staring out vacantly before him. A trim, little figure approached with a coffee service.

"Looks as though he had some had news," remarked Ward as he watched the old German slowly pick up the

paper and then look pathetically toward the young woman with the coffee.

"Yes," returned Athena, with the tears already in her eyes. "The chambermaid told me all about them. It's confirmation of the news of the death of his last son—there were four of them, all killed in battle—and now he has only that daughter left. See, how she tries to avoid hearing the news and how he hesitates to tell her."

Ward's eyes moistened and then he said:

"I wish that they would put all these kings in a forty acre lot and let them fight it out among themselves."

It was such incidents as these that made Athena and her father yearn more and more for America, their land of peace, and they looked to O'Rourke to lead them there, for he had seemed to become such a part of each of their lives that they did not know how to get along without him.

In neutral Holland they took a channel steamer to go over to England, for they were booked to ship from Southampton. It was a night sailing. After a comfortable dinner the three strolled out on deck to enjoy the twang of the December shore air, as in a delicious blend it mellowed itself into an inspiriting breath with the salt spray of the sea.

Finally Ward, excusing himself, went to retire, leaving Athena and O'Rourke to talk undisturbed, and for the first time since they had stood at the temple of the Winged Victory at Athens.

"How good you have been to us," remarked Athena.

"Ah, no," he protested. "Little have I done to repay the benefactions of your father, the benefactions which I confided to you on the Acropolis."

The mention of the glorious citadel brought to their minds the setting of that wonderful scene of their first sentimental expressions, if such they could be called. . . . Both in their memory again saw the little temple with its fluted columns and broken pediments, but all aglow with the sunshine and the rosy golden touch which time alone paints upon the face of marble. Again they saw the sea—the winding roads and the sapphire edge of the mountains beyond the green fields.

"Do you know," confided Athena, "you have not told us any of your plans. I take it for granted that you are

returning with us to America."

"To America?" he questioned absent-mindedly, and then as if with a clearer thought, said:

"I am afraid it will be a long time before I can get back to the dear land of my longing."
"What!" exclaimed Athena. "You mean to say that you intend to leave my father before the voyage is done, and—, . . . '' she paused, fearful of what she might say.

"But my duty-, my labor is here," he exclaimed. "One cannot always choose his place of residence any more than he can choose his associates."

"But you seem to do the latter," protested Athena, inno-

cent of any intention of bantering.

The ship was almost entirely in darkness and there was barely enough light from the stars to make out the cameo lines of her features, until slowly, beyond them the drift of the new moon trickled over the waters, betraying the deep earnestness upon the faces of both.

"But we shall be so sorry to have you go," persisted Athena. "You have become, well-, . . . as it were, a sort of a member of our family." In a moment she regretted

the utterance.

A couple of seamen, pulling and winding upon a hawser, brought the two closer together. She felt offended, when after the rope had been drawn in and the men had gone, that he drew down farther on the railing upon which they were leaning, and away from her

"Have you said anything to my father about your

deserting us?" she at length asked.

"No," and the tone of his voice to her was like heavy lead, "for we will yet be some little time together and then, besides, I hardly know what I am going to do. I have some war material here which I might work up into a book, or perhaps my paper will want to send me to try a chance upon the battlefields, although it looks as if there will be no war corresponding in this great contest."

She felt rebellious. . . . It did not seem right for him to

make his plans so absolutely independent of her own.

For a long time they stood together in silence, each looking at the cradle mantle of the new born moon as it trailed down over the sea.

"It is rather windy for you here, is it not?" he remarked. "Perhaps it is too cold for you to remain on deck."

"Ah, no," she returned. "It is too early yet to go into

the stuffy cabin. . . . Come," she bantered gaily. "I saw a cozy corner underneath the Captain's bridge, and we can watch the moon from there."

Together they walked down to the corner of the deserted deck, where there was just room enough for the two chairs.

"See!" she continued gaily. "Evidently they have re-

served it just for us."

O'Rourke rang for the deck steward to go and get the blankets and then after he had tucked her cozily in, seated himself.

"I used to think that the joker who always remarks in a dead silence, 'Now, don't everybody speak at once,' was a nuisance, but somehow now I would think the remark would seem almost appropriately humorous," she commenced.

O'Rourke looked at her inquiringly.

"What are you thinking of?" she asked.

"I hardly believe that you would call it 'thinking,' "he responded. "I was just trying to get a thought started some way. I don't seem, however, to get onto any pivot

to make a thought balance."

"But, you who make a business of thinking and recording your thoughts in print should never have any trouble in getting your thoughts started," she remarked, somewhat surprised at the familiar tone she was assuming even in spite of herself.

He folded his hands and then at length said in an apparently inappropriate fashion, not heeding her previous

remark:

"You see, I have had a rather long play time, more than a working man should ever take, for you know that playing always means paying the fiddler when the jig is danced."

"I don't understand."

"No," he returned. "By your fortunate position as the daughter of one of the richest men of the world of course it will be hard for you to understand that there is such a thing as a man being 'broke'—, flat broke."

"Oh, money, mere money," returned Athena. "Why

should such a horrid thing be ever mentioned?"

"I merely mentioned it in self-defense," said O'Rourke, with a quicker utterance. "Recause I would not have you think that I would let you and your father go on home alone together were it not that I am now absolutely penniless," and he laughed as if the confession pleased him.

"But my father will give you all the money you want,"

urged Athena.

"Yes, I know it," returned O'Rourke. "But I would never take it. . . . All these years I have been receiving his benefactions and accumulating money indebtedness to him which, from my viewpoint, can only be paid back in like."

She lifted up her gloved hand protestingly, but he still

went on.

"Yes. Independence in money matters has been the delight of my life and my indebtedness to your father in his benefactions has actually worried me for years. . . . Now, I have figured out," and he bent forward, eager to give her his confidence. "I have figured out that the mere money value of what your father has done for me equals just about what I paid for the journey from Constantinople here with the chartering of the steamer. . . . At least," and he laughed again, "I hope it is enough—, for those twenty thousand dollars were all I had in the whole world."

"What!" she exclaimed. "You mean to say that you,

yourself, have paid for the expense of this voyage?"

"Why certainly. You both came with me as my guests."
"But my father—, yes, and I—, I will never permit it,"
she declared.

"As the Turks say: 'What is, must be,' and every man has a right to acquit himself of his obligations."

She leaned over and placed her hand upon his arm.

"But for me—, for my sake—, you will permit it, won't you? Of course, between us—, between you and me—, that is, between you and my father, there can be no question of money, for it is there—, and it is yours, all that you may want of it," and she leaned towards him until he felt her breath faintly playing upon his cheek.

For some reason which neither of them could ever have explained, in a moment they both found themselves standing, at first side by side, then she facing him, nervously pulling

at her gloves.

"Will you not do it?—, do it for my sake—, just for me, and come home with us," and again her hand, now

ungloved, sought his arm.

"Ah!" he exclaimed as he looked at her, a new light dawning upon him. "How greatly I should love to. . . . But I cannot—, I cannot—, for it is only here in this war country that I can best meet the needs of my wife."

"What!" she exclaimed. "You—, you are married? You are married?"

Then everything swam before her and she reached out her hand to steady herself.

XXVIII A DECK CONFIDENCE

They had quite a little trouble the next morning in docking at Tillsbury, but after O'Rourke had put the baggage through the customs, going back on to the ship, Ward

approached, saving:

"My daughter is not feeling well. . . . I wish to have a special train service for her if possible. It will be best for her to remain upon the boat until I can get the nurses for whom the ship's surgeon has already sent. If you will arrange for that I will go and remain with her for she is almost hysterical. . . . Poor girl, a sort of nervous breakdown such as I never knew her to have before."

O'Rourke went to arrange for the special train and returning in half an hour found the old man pacing the deck

dejectedly.

"My daughter has told me all, O'Rourke," he exclaimed. "Told me all about you not wanting to continue with us because of a mere matter of money. Of course, I know just how you feel, for you are a man after my own heart."

O'Rourke's face brightened.

"Yes, all that sort of thing could be arranged even if you have a wife, although, of course, we cannot take you from her. By the way, Sally seems to have taken it for granted that you were a bachelor, although I knew to the contrary. Where is your wife?"

"In Paris," simply responded O'Rourke, "the last time I heard from her, at least that is where I have been sending

the remittances.

"Yes," said Ward, sitting down and crossing his long legs. "I know. Well, why not bring her along too?"

Two or three men came hurrying up the gangway. "I think that's 'im, sir. I think that's Mr. O'Rourke,"

they heard a steward say as he showed the newcomers where Ward and O'Rourke were standing.

The three men bolted forward, each one extending a card at the same time, and commencing a volley of questions.

They were newspaper reporters and had scant time to get

their story ready for the first edition.

One of them, as if to establish his prior claim to the interview, extended O'Rourke a copy of the paper which he represented. . . . Unfolding it, O'Rourke was surprised to see his own picture on the front page. Looking at the date he saw that the paper was a month old, and underneath the headlines, he read as follows:

"Paris, France.—Timothy O'Rourke, well known American author, has just been divorced in Paris on the ground of desertion by the star prima donna, Mabelle Sanson of the Grand Opera. Her marriage to the millionaire Brazilian diamond king, Dom Pedro Araldo, followed the granting of the decree.

"Default was taken against Mr. O'Rourke upon the ground that he had deserted his wife and become a war correspondent with the Germans."

"Well," smiled O'Rourke, looking up at the reporters. "This certainly is news to me, although it seems to be a

month old."

"Yes," remarked the cub reporter, trying to draw O'Rourke aside and greatly pleased at the advantage which he thought he had obtained. "Yes, I knew that you would never get any of our papers over in Germany, so I brought that along especially for you, and if you only give me a scoop interview, we will feature it for today's edition."

O'Rourke laughed.

"What do you want to know?"

"I want to know if you will contest the divorce, together with any other inside facts which you may care to give me."

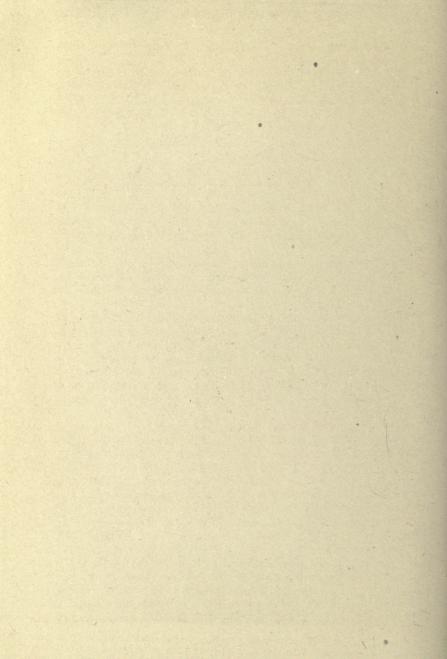
Ward himself was highly amused at the antics of the reporters who, pencil and paper in hand, were shuttling in and out before O'Rourke. But O'Rourke said solemnly:

"Ordinarily a man who has been amiably separated from his wife for two years and who has done nothing but attend to the mere details of forwarding allowances is not in a position to contest any of her wishes."

After a few minutes of useless questioning, the newspaper



"Oh! The grief of that peasant mother. It is such as she who alone repair the ravages of war. With her face still swollen with weeping she turns from



men scampered down the gangway to manufacture their

story.

"Well," remarked the old man with a broad smile as he placed his hand on O'Rourke's, "things do move around pretty quickly in this whirligig world."

XXIX FOR OLD GLORY

After O'Rourke left them at the train, he did not tell Athena nor her father where he was lodging, merely giving them a newspaper address in case they needed him before the sailing.

Neither he nor Athena dared look at each other, although Athena had wondrously recovered from her nervous attack as soon as her father had told her of the episode of

O'Rourke's divorce.

The old man, when they were installed in their hotel, complained of having the chills and retired early that evening, sending word to his daughter the next morning that he felt tired, and thought that he would keep to the bed for a few hours. Athena went to see him and became alarmed at the unnatural brilliancy of the eyes and the hectic flush on his cheeks.

The doctor came.

"Just a nervous fever," he said reassuringly. "But when one is old no chances should be taken. You had better delay your sailing until he has fully recovered. It may be some time."

"Daughter," remarked the old man cheerily. "As long as we've got to stay here in London, please see that O'Rourke stays here too for awhile, since I may need him."

Athena penned a note, very formal, at first written in the third person, but finally thawed out to a mere simple request for O'Rourke to call on her father. She hardly knew how she did feel towards O'Rourke but was sorely wounded with the thought that he had no right to let her remain in ignorance of his marriage. Of course, being divorced now made some difference. . . . But what sort of a difference? . . . Then arguing with herself, she reflected excusingly:

"But such a wonderful man... He never communicates information unless he is asked, and absent-minded as he is, he gave it of course, under the circumstances, no thought. And after all, what affair is it to me?..."

Then her woman's dignity asserted itself. She felt ashamed that she had shown herself to be so weak in her attitude towards him. But perhaps after all he had not

divined.

O'Rourke came. . . . It was afternoon and he wore the top hat and frock coat of conventional afternoon London. She thought she had never seen anyone so handsome, . . . but looked at him coldly, hardly acknowledging his greeting and withdrawing her hand quickly, almost as she extended it to him.

O'Rourke spent the rest of the afternoon with the old man. It was arranged to delay the sailing for a full week.

Finally Ward commenced abruptly:

"O'Rourke, . . . I have a great work for you—, a work such as never before has been efficiently undertaken. . . . It is a great American work to be done for the great American people, and a labor so difficult that I know of only one man who can carry it to fulfillment." He paused and looked long at O'Rourke. "That man—, that man is you."

O'Rourke started and then wondered if Ward could not be a little out of his head with his illness. Then he cour-

teously inclined his head and listened.

"O'Rourke," continued Ward. "I knew your father and your mother as children and I have known you from your babyhood up. I am getting old and even were I young would not have the ability to carry on this work. . . . I—, I have merely money, but you have the soul to make the flesh of this work speak so that the whole nation will hear. Now, do not fail me I beg you—, do not fail me."

"I shall always be glad to serve you," returned O'Rourke,

his interest thoroughly awakened.

"Well, this is a work," continued the old man, "that I have been thinking of ever since the war broke out here in Europe. . . . Nations are still born of war, grow great by war and die by war. We have got into the American fashion of late, of thinking that our great country is especially and forever exempt from the danger of war. We feel ourselves in the position of the good man dispensing charity, who does not understand why anyone should want to rob

him. But war will come to us and the time to prepare for war is in a time of peace. We do not want war; I don't believe that any country really ever wanted war, but war comes whether it is wanted or not, and the nation wins that prepares."

O'Rourke nodded approvingly.

"Yes. You understand me. That's the reason I am telling you. But too many of us Americans believe that just because we want to do what is right that the whole world will treat us right. But that is not so. . . . International law has not proceeded very far along the lines of justice. In war, justice means the power to kill, to destroy, to conquer."

"Yes, you are right," approved O'Rourke. "International law is a mere scape-goat, as a rule of action governing the nations which claim to adhere to it. It is naught. What is the Hague conference? What is the most

solemn treaty?"

"You have said it—they are naught," exclaimed the old man, "for we are still living in an age of the sword. Strength to wield the sword means just so much justice as the arm has force to carry the sword. I will never admit that our American people have with them any spirit of evil and wrong doing, but war will come to us nevertheless and through no fault of our own."

The old man raised up in his bed, and lifting his hands, cried out in a tone that enthused O'Rourke:

"I have fought twice for my country and even now, aged as I am, I would go forth. God has showered the bounty of a great wealth upon me and now I am leaving it; but before I go I want to be sure that my money will do some good. Do you know," he continued in a slow and confidential voice, "when you feel yourself going down into the valley, it puzzles one to know how to make your money still labor for vou. I've been sidetracked on a good many plans of well doing, all of which are useful even to the Albanian and the foodstuff proposition of Magnus', which by the way I was sorry to have had to abandon. But now I see my mission; I see the great crusade already commencing to assemble before I go-a crusade for the American people-, and a crusade in which you will be a leader, for without you and the confidence which I have in you, it would come to nothing."

O'Rourke stroked his chin thoughtfully.

"Yes, an American crusade, led by an American, for the peace of the American people—, a crusade that will make every American prepare himself to be a soldier. . . . Why is it that today German leadership is holding off the whole world? Because every German has been taught to be a soldier, just as every American ought, in a reasonable way, to play his part in our national defense."

"But should we go to that extreme?" interjected

O'Rourke.

"That's it," ejaculated the old man almost excitedly. "I am glad that you put that tone of moderation to my words. No, not to any extreme, for militarism will destroy Americanism. . . . No—, it must be moderation in all things, but in all there must be that preparedness for the protection of our institutions which means an armed force and not a mere armed citizenry. For years I believed that America was all-sufficient, that she did not need my help, but I saw my foolishness on the way back from the Turkish capital, and now I have found a way."

O'Rourke listened.

"My plan is to establish a newspaper. I will start it off with a capital of twenty-five million. That ought to keep it going for awhile. . . . The only thing that I ask is that its motto be: "Preserve peace by preparing for war." I will give it just three things: Its name, its motto, and the money to run it. You must do the rest."

"What name do you propose?" asked O'Rourke, now

thoroughly interested.

"It shall be called 'Old Glory."

"An excellent name," returned O'Rourke, "and one that expresses its idea and purpose."

"I am glad you like it, Mr. Editor," smiled Ward.

O'Rourke laughed back at his new title.

"And now as to your salary, O'Rourke; . . . for, of course, you will accept the position just to please me, will you not?"

"It is very kind of you," replied O'Rourke. "Indeed I will be glad to have the chance to be of such service. . . . The salary may be a matter of secondary consideration."

"Well, how would fifty thousand dollars a year do?"

"Fifty thousand!" ejaculated O'Rourke.

"Yes, fifty thousand on a twenty year contract; for my editor must be the best salaried newspaper man in America."

O'Rourke gasped.

"You are worth it," continued the old man. "Is it a go?"
O'Rourke hesitated, astounded at the generosity, when the old man calculated:

"Fifty thousand for twenty years makes only a million." As you wish," returned O'Rourke feebly, hardly believ-

ing his ears.

"Well, then, Mr. Editor," gaily remarked Ward. "You may commence your duties at once by passing over to me that ink and paper that I, myself, may prepare the contract."

Bracing himself upon his pillow, the old man dashed off a few words, signed it and then passed it over to O'Rourke,

saying:

"Sign and make a copy of it and then return it to me.

Under the contract your pay commences today."

O'Rourke did as he was bid and after he had made and signed the copy, gave it to Ward who, carefully folding it, slipped it deep under his pillow, saying softly, as though to himself:

"For 'Old Glory.' For 'Old Glory.'"

XXX NOT MILITARISM BUT AMERICANISM

The next day O'Rourke and Ward again discussed the

great newspaper enterprise.

"Yes," said the old man, "our newspaper must not encourage militarism, but it must find some way of putting the great forces of our natural wealth and citizenship into such shape that they may be immediately mobilized in the service of the country. It sounds contradictory, doesn't it; but I want my country to be both military and still opposed to militarism."

"Not contradictory at all," responded O'Rourke. "It is a long swing of the pendulum from military preparedness

to militarism."

"I am glad you understand me," smiled Ward. "I knew you would. That is the reason I am so happy in the thought that even though I am dead and gone, my money will do some good."

"Of course the propaganda would be entirely through political channels. That is to say, that we would have to be active politically, picking out candidates for Congress and approving or disapproving of the administration as it seemed right in view of the crystallization of public sentiment which will act as our hand and hour glass," mused O'Rourke.

"That's it! That's it!" excitedly exclaimed Ward, his eyes agleam with enthusiasm, and then striking one hand in the palm of the other, "and all the time fighting for American institutions—, the sort that we now have today and must always perpetuate. There are some twenty-three republics in America and our newspaper must fight for the interest of our Latin neighbors as well as for our own, and keep on fighting to prevent the nuisance of a European caste system ever disturbing our own national existence."

"Caste system is good," smiled O'Rourke.

"Yes, I hate castes. I hate them," said the old man. "Ever since a mere boy I hated them, when I read an English book in which the author always spoke of the 'King's soldiers,' the 'King's navy,' the 'King's ships,' and the 'King's people,' as if one man actually could own and dispose of a whole nation. . . . That's the trouble with all those European countries to-day: England, Germany, Russia and even France-, they are all under the shadow of the medieval caste system and we must fight it; we must fight it so that it does not ever enter into our own institution. . . . Not that I believe in war," he continued, "and its wicked waste, for there is no more reason for war between nations than there is for burglary and murder among men. But as long as we have thieves and robbers threatening our property and the security of our homes, then just so long shall we have war threatening us from abroad. We might just as well declare that the police and jails and penitentiaries are unnecessary as to assert that an actual standing army to which every year will be added the classes of the reserves, is not needful for the maintenance and safeguard of our institutions. . . . Not that I believe in going to any extreme," he declared as he shook his head, as if arguing with himself. "I would be among the first to give my all for the perpetuation of universal peace, were it possible, But alas, there is no remedy against war to be found in the whole history of mankind."

"It is a pity, isn't it?" reflected O'Rourke, "and almost a confession of the failure of civilization and the breakdown of man's progress. I have gone over a good many figures recently," he continued, "and I am simply astounded at not only the actual expenditures but of the actual waste of war, regardless of the economic loss by changing artisans and craftsmen to soldiers, and fishermen into sailors. Why, it actually costs, according to the most moderate German estimate, for, say, three million men in the field, at only an average at a dollar and half per day per man, a total of four million and a half dollars a day, without counting the interest on the investment of ordnance and equipments. No benefit is produced from this tremendous expediture. . . . It is all used to destroy and tear down that which a whole generation has been busy in building up, and this is true of all European nations as well as of Japan."

"Yes," confirmed the old man. "Yes, it is just the sort of waste that the cracksman effects on a whole building when he dynamites a safe; and we must be prepared for these international cracksmen whose envy is excited by our wealth. . . . But in this regard there is something which we must never forget—that the tremendous aggregations of American capital may form themselves into armament trusts, which while exciting the people to prepare for war will saddle upon them the burden of their greed and avarice. The dollar patriotism of gun and shrapnel makers is one of the greatest menaces of our country—and we must show the people how to protect themselves against the sinister combi-

nations of government contract schemers."

"Have you thought out any program of organization for your—for 'Old Glory,'" asked O'Rourke, and he pronounced the title of the paper, with a ring, for it pleased him and the words meant to his patriotic soul, a slogan of strength and an honest defiance to despotism and tyranny and all that could insiduously endanger the liberty of his native land.

"I leave everything to you," returned Ward. "What suggestions I may make will be general. . . . As to the mechanical part of the Daily, I have no preference whatever. You may publish it where you may; in New York or San Francisco, or anywhere between these points, as you will. . . . You may make the paper large or small—with few or many pages—and set up the editorials where you

will—on the front or back page or in the middle. Of all this, I care little—just so every issue gets the news—the true—the certain news, and that it reaches the people, my fellow-citizens, more than any other paper of the whole world—and shows them both the folly and the wisdom of every day."

The old man thought a long moment.

"Do you know all my life long I have admired men who could write. Public speakers never did thrill me very much and oratory is becoming a lost art among us, and perhaps beneficially so, for demagogues have always been more numerous and more convincing than the scribes of truth. But the man who can write—who can push down out of the tip of his pen, words that will come to the world as a command to be obeyed—such a man is the real leader of the world today, and unfortunately such men are too rare."

He raised himself up on his elbow and then with a ges-

ture exclaimed:

"And why is it? Why is it that the most precious possession of the world to-day, the lightning like collation and circulation of news from all parts of the world, so that the information may be accessible and intelligible to all—why is it that this possession does sometimes as much harm as good?"

"Because newspapers are run for personal profit and for private ends," returned O'Rourke. They call themselves the 'Public Press,' when they are actually the 'Private Press.'"

"Exactly," confirmed Ward. "And see to what extreme the selfishness of private newspaper control extends and how it seeks to control public sentiment in its own behalf for its own selfish interests without any regard whatsoever for the rights of others. Ah," and he gave a despairing wave of the hand. "What a different land this would be—how different, would in the fact the whole world be—if newspapers, the crystallizers of public sentiment had more of real human justice read into their columns and not so much of human avarice and greed. . . . In my opinion the time may come when a government will have to publish its own newspapers in order to properly protect its citizens from the knavery and conspiracy which the newspapers have continually been putting up against them."

"But if the private ownership of newspapers is discontinued, how can there be expression of the different

opinions?" asked O'Rourke.

"What is the need of opinions in newspapers if there is always a sufficient statement of fact. The American people are intelligent. What they want in a newspaper is facts, not opinions," countered Ward. "The people want the news—the facts, not opinions and arguments. If they have the news they will be able to draw their own deductions."

"You in your long service in Congress have undoubtedly had much to do with newspapers," observed O'Rourke.

"Yes," admitted the old man. "And I have found that ordinarily you can buy any newspaper body and soul by paying the price; every man on the paper from the overworked managing editor down to the froliesome errand boy will become your slave. Let them know that you want to be called a hero and the next day there will be published to order a lot of manufactured tommyrot which would make you almost sick to read. There are two great delusions under which many American papers labor today—the first is that they think that they are fooling the rich and poor suckers that give them the money, and the second delusion is the thought that they can fool the people."

O'Rourke smiled.

"Now, for another suggestion—let me advise that you go slow," continued the old man. "Take your time to get your bearings. If you can get your first edition out in a year from now-you will be doing well. You have been much away from America—and will have to re-Americanize yourself. . . . You must find out what public sentiment is at the present time. You must go the length and breadth of our great land, to discover what the people are really thinking, if they think at all upon these momentous new questions which are now arising upon the bloody horizon of this generation. It won't take you long in our East, for New York rather dominates the sentiment of the whole Atlantic Coast-and the conflicting interests there will only confuse you and deflect your mind from the real purpose of our labor. But tarry long in the middle West-study those marvelous cities of the Great Lakes and then beyond, . . . those splendid new centers of the Western plains. Then go on to that new and wonderful Empire of the Northwest with all the marvel of its suddenly perfected natural development. Look long at the cities study them and the people who dwell within them. Consider in detail that type of wonderful American who flourishes like a Green Bay tree there by the Puget Sound and the wide Columbia River."

The old man gave a wide sweep of his arm.

"And then they of the Gold and Silver States farther to the South. Tarry long among them—know them well—for it is these people whom I would first convince. I want the wave of American patriotism to start westward and roll on back toward the East of their origin, for their traditions are newer and their raw fervor will do much toward helping us in the more sluggish centers on the Atlantic side."

O'Rourke carried away by the words nodded his head in

approval.

"Yes—go slow—get your reckonings so that the course will be straight ahead. This awful European conflict should be our awakening. It will be a long time in its settlement and although I feel that we should hurry on as fast as we can in our purpose—I am confident that nothing will be lost in waiting until the perspective is all clear before us."

"When do you think that you, yourself, will be able to return?" asked O'Rourke as the vision of Athena rose

up mistlike in his brain.

"Oh, sickness and old age are two infirmities that no man can count time by," he smilingly answered. "It is a long journey home and with my daughter here I should be satisfied to remain until the second strength comes. How long—who can tell?"

Then he added, noticing O'Rourke's downcast expression, "But you really will not need me. Go right along and I know that the purpose will be fulfilled. Perhaps it may be better that you work along entirely alone, for you know that with the infirmities of age comes sometimes a childish attention to trivial things which might perplex you."

O'Rourke looked at him long and wondered—wondered at the confidence he had inspired to merit such great indulgence. And then he thought of the purpose—of the great purpose—the purpose of *Old Glory* and his heart beat strong with resolution as he felt the field of his new endeavor calling him.

Almost reverently he arose, stretched out to take the hand tremblingly reached to him and silently felt the mantle of the old man's strength falling upon him.

There was a long pause until Ward continued in a matter

of fact tone, but with vehement fluency:

"And there is one thing, O'Rourke, that you must not forget. The American people are all right, but you must

remember that their self approbation may be the cause of their ruin. For they are a people who have grown great simply because of their great constructive genius—a genius which merely comes from the broad and varied sources of their common intelligence. . . . But what does constructive genius avail a people unless they can adapt their own national life to the plan of the whole world about them, and play the part of their own salvation in the tragedy of the world's unfolding. Ah, that is where we fail-we can construct, but we cannot adapt. . . . Like children we build our houses of sand upon the beautiful strands of our own shores with never a thought of where the rushing tide waters come from, nor when they may bring destruction. We content ourselves with a glimpse of the horizon that curtains the distance, with never a thought of what the shores are like which lie beyond; we survey our country as a land of privilege, never realizing that privilege means obligation, and there is no favor without the reciprocal obligation of giving another in return."

O'Rourke followed attentively.

"Yes—we are becoming so self-satisfied that it is already considered un-American to criticize American life. And why? Because we are soft—we have become soft and daily are becoming softer—and the duty of *Old Glory*, O'Rourke, will be to put iron in the hearts of our men, that the race—the great American race—may again become strong."

His eyes shone deep as he gazed long and steadfastly

before him.

"Ah, my fellow citizens," he cried out in a loud voice, raising up and looking beyond him, his arms outstretched as though he were about to address a great multitude. "Ah, my fellow citizens," he waited for a moment as though listening to the light confusion of a mass meeting assembling in orderly fashion. His face was ecstatic and rigid, his gesture fixed. He again waited as if thrilled by the vastness of a multitude and the magnetism of their presence as it came to him in his fancy.

"My fellow citizens," he again began. "Ah! ye do not know, with eyes ye do not see, with cars ye do not hear. But the message shall come. Yea, there will be found those who shall show ye the way." He sank back exhausted in the effort and the violent play of his own imagination.

O'Rourke, alarmed at the old man's hallucination, rushed to the bed and caught him in his arms, as tenderly as a child.

The veteran patriot's eves were closed. He breathed deeply, resting peacefully in the strong arms of O'Rourke. Then

he slowly looked upward, his gaze again strong and steady. "It was not imagination," he said, slowly, "why I looked and spoke that way-I cannot tell-except that it was to bring to your own mind the greatness of the task which lies before you. Love for my country coursed in my veins before I was born-from the heart springs of my American mother, saintly in the quality of her patriotism. It was she who sent me forth in tears of resignation and welcomed me back, again with tears, but of pride and joy, when I twice went forth to offer my life to my country and twice safely returned. And her patriotism will still live on after I myself am gone-live on because you will find the way to foster it."

O'Rourke was deeply moved. . . . He laid his hand caressingly upon that of the old soldier. Then he looked at him long and wondered; looked at the gaunt massive form outlined underneath the white covering of the bed. and at that earnest face. He wondered at the philanthropy of that patriot, that American patriot whose spirit ever wandered back to the land of his birth, the land to which he had already offered and given the best of his force and

strength.

In his mind's eye he pictured him as, when a callow lad he bade his mother farewell and followed the waving flag that led him down over the arid cacti plains and the mirage painted deserts of Mexico, to the carnage of a merciless war, and then he saw him, as the mother's eyes again filled with tears, when to him in the ranks of blue she waved her farewell and thrilled her boy's heart with her final

Godspeed.

O'Rourke was moved—deeply so; the setting about him seemed biblical and he found himself before he knew it kneeling by the old warrior's side—with a keener feeling of American patriotism than he had ever before known. In his ears, his imagination pronounced the words, "Greater love hath no man"- and then in a moment incongruous as it was, his imagination appealed to another sense and he felt himself standing at the chariot of the prophet with the winging of heavenly forms about him—and the rustle of the mantle as it fell upon his shoulders.

And his fancy must have seemed to him most real-for

when he again stood upright there was a zealous look in his eyes—a look of resolution, of faith, of a courage born from a new strength.

He threw back his shoulders and gathered his arms upward, as if he still felt in his fancy, the rustling mantle of the old patriot's strength falling upon him.

XXXI THE DOOR AJAR

The next few days were very busy ones for O'Rourke, for he commenced his duties as the prospective editor of "Old Glory," going about to the leading newspaper leaders of London, all of whom he knew personally, and getting the benefit of their advice. He and the old man were daily in almost continual consultation, and Ward grew more and more en-

thused with the project.

O'Rourke had barely had a moment's conversation with She continued to avoid him, and several times left abruptly the room of her father as O'Rourke entered. Her coldness and apparent indifference depressed him. Her own room adjoined that of her father's and once, when Ward was reading some papers to O'Rourke through the door partly ajar, he heard her moving about, busy with some of the little affairs of her toilet, singing softly to herself in a tremulous, subdued voice, the pitch keyed high, but the tone low and sweet. Then she abruptly stopped and he heard the rustle of her skirt and the catch of a cabinet door as she opened and closed it. And as he listened, her vision came up before him, just as he had seen her on the Acropolis that day. Again he sensed the perfume of her hair, wafted to him by the breezes of the Ægean. Her face in his fancy shown down upon him from the sapphire sky above Salamis-in a beauty to him fairer than that which inspired Phidias. Again he seemed to hold her in his arms as he gathered her to him in the black waters of the Marmora.

"Ah! What a woman! What an angel!" he reflected, unconscious that Ward had finished the reading and was

speaking to him.

With his arms folded, O'Rourke still listened and dreamt

on, feeling as though covered by a blanket of emotion as he followed her light footfall. His mind became suddenly obsessed with the thought of her presence, just beyond, and he realized that the world would be forever lonely without her.

The music of the orchestra in the great hotel lobby below came floating up the elevator shafts, the tones sweetly accordant with the heavier orchestral players syncopating their parts, and bringing out the sweetness of the lighter instruments.

She, too, heard it and hummed along with the music, as

she went about, busied with her work.

Then the music stopped and the voices also, and the rustle of her gown near the door caused him to turn. . . . She greeted him formally, but her eyes looked only at her father.

"I think, father, that I shall use the private pass to-day at the National Gallery. I am sorry that you cannot go with me. I will not be gone long," and kissing him, and with a light nod in recognition of O'Rourke's standing, she passed out.

O'Rourke's heart sank with this renewed evidence of her indifference. Long after her dress had rustled through the open doorway, he still stared after her. . . . Then taking a paper which Ward handed him, he noticed that his hands were trembling, and there seemed to be some voice calling down from the depths of his being, "You love her. You love her."

XXXII MORE THAN MERE SPOKEN WORDS

The act of a vandal had closed the National Gallery the last time Athena had been in London, and with great eagerness she ran up the stairway through the portico and on into the Gallery. She had already been there a full hour when, in the perspective, down over the waxed floor, she saw a man strolling towards her. It was O'Rourke.

"I took the liberty to follow you. I hope that I am not

intruding."

"One always understands the pictures better with a com-

panion," she said, and turned over the leaves of her guide book with her gloved hand.

"We have never even talked pictures together, have we?"

he remarked.

She shook her head.

"I know you must know something about pictures. Please explain them," she asked, still avoiding his gaze.

"Who can tell anything about a picture or about art?"

he mused.

"Yes," she submitted. "I know pictorial art is seen and felt, but hardly described, particularly to Americans who have had so little opportunity to know art as they know it

here in Europe."

"True," he assented and then dreamily went on as he looked down the long perspective of the gilded frames. "The art that I knew as a child was the art of the woods, the fields and flowered meadows, when along the tumbling brook and the sweep of the river, I learned to know the songbirds and to call each flower by name. That was the art of my childhood-, the art that came to me as I followed the plowman's furrows, fresh with the incense of Spring and waited eagerly for each dull roll and break of the sod to see if perchance I might not find the treasure of some Indian relic, in the delicately worked flint of an arrow head. Yes, my art then was the art of the gleaming corn fields, and the rolling waters of the lake purling in at the foot of the bluffs, and in understanding that art—, that art of Nature—, I think afterward I found a better understanding of painted canvases and chiseled marbles."

"Yes," she supplemented, "Communion with Nature;

that is what the artists call it, is it not?"

"Yes, and as America grows old and the cities encroach upon the country, of course, we do not get that same communion with Nature that our fathers had. But it is then here in these galleries, these great depositories of art that we still hear the idealized song of the birds and breathe in the fragrance of the meadows and the woodlands and listen to the purl and song of the waters."

He led her over, as he spoke, towards the painting by

Titian called "The Repose."

"You remember," he asked, "when we were at Eleusis; in the ruins of the Temple of Mysteries, that we spoke of that great past religion founded upon a mother's love? Now,

look at the faces of those two women—could there be any thing more beautiful, more inspiring?"

She looked up at the canvas, with its softly blended colors of the softened blue and the golden brown, and gazed long at the beauty of the features.

"The face is a reflection of the heart," he continued, "and it is the woman's heart as delineated on the features of those beautiful figures that humanizes the world."

They sat down on the red plush settee in the midst of the aisle.

"But women are so foolish," she expostulated. "Their influence is so weak. Oh, how can I ever forget my weakness on the boat when we came to Tillsbury."

"Please don't," he pleaded.

She closed her guide book and fingered it tremulously.

"If I were a man I suppose I should be called a cad," she murmured.

"No," he responded. "It is I who am the cad, whatever the ugly little word may mean, for not having thought to have gone into the details of my private life."

"Far from blaming you," she returned. "I find such secretiveness under the circumstances quite commendable."

"What circumstances?" he asked.

"Oh, what one of the ladies of the hotel was telling me about you—, your nobility towards the lady who was—, your wife." Her tone dropped to almost a whisper. "She told me that in Paris she had heard how you fell in love with her voice and underwent every sacrifice to give her the education to make her the great singer that she is."

"Oh, please don't speak of it," he said, and then asked,

point blank:

"Are you prejudiced against divorced men?"

She turned and looked him fully in the eyes for the first time.

"Why do you ask? Why would my opinion interest you?"

"Because—," he faltered. "Because—," and then folding his arms looked before him, the sentence still unfinished.

"It was good of you to want me to go back to America with you," he recommenced. "Do you still wish it?"

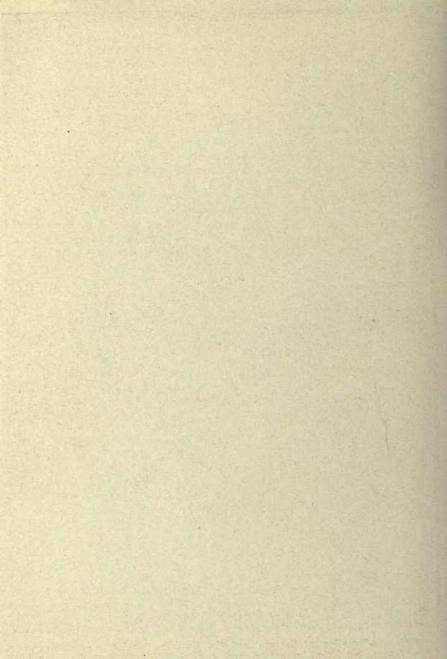
"My father has never been so happy as he has been since he has taken you into his ambition. Therefore, why should I not be pleased?"

He dropped his hands to his side and leaning back gazed

into her eyes as she, too, looked at him.



"It's confirmation of the news of the death of his last son—there were four of them all killed in battle—and now he has only that daughter left



In the movement the guide book fell over onto the floor. He reached down and picked it up and in the act both of them had risen.

As though dazed, they looked long upon the picture before them, but there was no thought of the picture in their Then their eyes again met, and her whole face was melted with tenderness, while a soft wave of emotion passed over his own.

"You speak of your father's ambition and-, and-of mine," he murmured softly, his hands thrilling upon hers as he returned the book.

"Do you know, I never could feel any ambition unless it

was made complete by sharing it with-"

He did not finish the phrase for as their spirits met in one long deep lingering look, they both understood, and a smile of happiness reflected an answer more eloquent than mere spoken words.

XXXIII THE DECORATION

They went on back toward the hotel, passing across Trafalgar Square, with Nelson's monument looming up over them—, the great hero's statue facing the placards on the balconies opposite, calling for recruits for Europe's bloodiest war.

From time to time a glance flashed between them, softly moulding their features in a caste of happiness; she with a smile of glory on her face, her lips trembling with the supreme emotion of the moment; he with eyes resting long, full and deep upon her, while from their depths she felt the magnetism of his love. Suddenly there set itself upon O'Rourke's features an expression which, as she looked, seemed to her to be born of doubt.

"What is it?" she asked, her own mind clouding.

He turned his face away from her and drew her back lightly toward the pedestal of the great monument.

"See," he said, pointing at one of the figures. "See, there is a soldier, and upon his breast he wears a decoration, to win which, he was ready to sacrifice his life."

Puzzled to know his meaning, she turned full toward him. He continued:

"Yes. We all want to wear decorations of some sort—, a decoration for courage—, something to always remind us that we have been worthy of the great reward."

"I don't understand," she said, wondering at his earnest-

ness.

"Yes," he said, speaking as if her own mind had fathomed what should have gone between. "A divorced man from some people's standpoint is always more or less broken; and to some, an abject pariah. Has such a man the right to take from a young and beautiful woman—, the most wonderful that God has ever made—, has such a man the right to take her in all her freshness and beauty, to perhaps some day regret the stigma which he, himself, bears?"

"But it was not your fault," she stoutly exclaimed. "You were noble. You played the man's part and the whole world

knows it."

"Ah, but," he responded sadly, "the fact still remains that there are some who will always find the stain even though it has been washed a thousand times away in the most cleansing pool of honor. You, I think, should not be misled in this great step. I must give you time. . . . I must not bind you by any promise."

Her face took on an expression of intense tenderness.

"Perhaps in a week or even in a day your mind may change."

She moved her head in denial.

"But you have not had time to find yourself, for I have been with you constantly, and propinquity always begets affection of some sort."

Slowly he drew from his pocket a card case. It was empty save for a little white strip of corded silk braid which he

took out and laid in his palm.

"This is yours," he said, "but I never intended to give it back to you. It came from your skirt which was torn away while we were struggling for our lives in the waters of Marmora. I found it the morning after in the hooks of my shoe."

He held it up and pressing it out upon his breast, said: "It attracted my attention because it is much like one of those ribbons they use for mounting decorations. It was torn away so neatly that it seemed to me to be an emblem,

and although it was foolish, I have treasured it ever since. Why—, I have really never known nor asked myself."

He passed it over to her and she took it mechanically.

"I never, as I now search back in my mind," he continued, "wronged you by thinking of you sentimentally, for as a married man I could not have done so, and then, somehow, I always thought that you cared for the Prince."

She made a gesture of protest and tendered him the braid. "No," he responded. "I have not won my decoration yet—, not until you know, and I know that there is no mistake," and he led her slowly along away from the noise of Charing Cross, those two souls communing together with the throbbing heart of the greatest city pulsing around them; to them unnoticed, unheard and unminded.

Arm in arm and in silence they went across the great square.

"When I meet you in America then I will know," he at

length ventured.

"And my father's program for you—it will be a long time

before we meet again?" she queried.

"Yes, long—but for the best—for then you will have your chance to find out if you really think that you should make this sacrifice."

"Are you not too considerate of me?" And then with a sudden feeling of distrust and with even a touch of bitterness in her voice—

"Perhaps it is, that you yourself do not care so much." She made a light gesture of despair, but there was something of resignation in it which made him for the moment wince. . . . Then he knew. She, the delicate minded, the gentle flower with a soul as clear as a moonbeam and a nature as warm as the glowing sun—she, with that wonderful affection for him, a love which might wither—might wilt under the ardor of his heroic sacrifice, so excruciating to him, could not fully understand.

"Ah! you do not know-you can perhaps not yet know,"

he said slowly, as he took the braid.

She seized his arm closer as they still walked slowly along. "You will have a chance by returning without me to find yourself. . . . to really know—, how you feel," he mur-

mured.

He did not look but he felt that tears had come to her eyes. She was biting her lips to restrain them.

"Do not fear to grieve me," he murmured softly. "But if you find that you have made a mistake, just destroy this—, this—; let me call it my symbol of happiness." And he handed her the bit of braid.

"And if I do not?" she asked bravely, as she gathered the

silk in her hand.

"Then send it to me; send it to me as soon as you are sure."

They were both silent as they came back to the hotel, and with every step O'Rourke's heart became more saddened with the doubt and uncertainty of the test he had imposed upon her, and all through the hours of the days that followed he heard something—a voice—within him continually repeating:

"You have lost her. You have lost her. By your folly

you have lost her."

And then another voice spoke from within him: "Be of good cheer—for she shall still be thine."

BOOK THREE

I THE LAND OF OLD GLORY

Nothing ever looked as good to O'Rourke as the American flag when he saw it floating from a pier head of East River. New York had changed greatly; there were higher building silhouettes, higher outlines in the long stretch of skyscrapers beyond, and new changes on both sides of the river, as the giant liner went its way to its mooring. But of such changes he made little note; it was for those other changes that he was looking-changes in the spirit-in the heart of the American people. Would their pulse of patriotism be quickened by the daily installments of news from the war zones? What effect would the terrible conflict have upon the whole people? Would it make them more patriotic, more earnest in their endeavors to work on in the cause of humanity, or would their blood run more sluggish in a mistaken sense of security, created by their own seeming immunity from the ravages of the great conflict?

Mechanically he went through the delay of the medical inspection—then the customs examination and finally found himself buzzing along in a taxi through the crowded streets to the hotel, earnestly scanning the faces he glimpsed as the

vehicles rolled along.

He found himself continually reflecting upon his great mission; and there were thoughts of Athena which ever floated like a vision before him. That *Old Glory* would succeed—he had never a doubt—and that Athena would be his—well— he was happy in the contemplation of the day when he felt that the decoration would come.

When would she send it to him? Would it be when Old Glory had finally appeared and when its success was certain—? Would it then come to him as a reward for his efforts and in commendation of his success; or would it perhaps come during the period of his long and arduous pre-

liminary labor to cheer and inspirit him in the solitude of his wanderings?

As his stay was not to be long in Gotham, he promptly made his way to the ticket office in the hotel lobby to make

reservations for the western journey.

It was a full quarter of an hour before he had routed his itinerary, for what with the telephone calls to the central stations, and the looking up of the time tables on the part of the loud-voiced ticket seller, talking in a voice which allowed everyone in the waiting line to inform himself concerning O'Rourke's first destination; it was not only a lengthy, but a very unprivate way to arrange for a passage across the continent.

"There they are at last, Mr. O'Rourke—" the office ticket seller finally exclaimed, as he pasted the tickets together and put them in an envelope after O'Rourke had signed them.

At the public mention of his name O'Rourke turned rather disturbed. He had a gentleman's aversion to having his name called out in public, but no one noticed it, not even the next in line, a solemn, tall, foreign looking man waiting his turn to occupy the attention of the ticket seller.

As O'Rourke pocketed his change and walked away, an unusual curiosity impelled him to again glance at the imperturbable and funereal looking stranger.

"What a character for a novel," thought he.

It was a hot night and O'Rourke was heartily glad to be getting away from New York, exulting the next morning at his escape from the heat as the cool breeze blew down from the Adirondacks. He felt keyed up. He had had success—great successes—successes that had only come after months and years of labor—but they had never made him as exuberant as the glorious prospect of this new venture which lay full and fair before him.

He wondered whether it was the love which he bore toward Athena or the glory in the prospect of his mission which enthused him most. Woman's love had never been a really essential part of his life. He had married—well, he hardly knew why. What was woman's love compared to that greater love which every human creature owed toward all humanity? He resolved his attitude toward Athena rather as a matter of worship than of mere love. As to the founding of a family—well—that had hardly even entered into his mind. He was perplexed and troubled to account

within himself as to the real sentiment of it all, but little by little his doubts gave away to confidence awakened by the joy of again being in the land of his birth.

The change from the companionable life of shipboard to the monotony and isolation of train travel would have worn depressingly upon him, had it not been for this buoyancy of his spirits as he reflected upon the work before him.

Yes, it was good to be back in the land of Old Glory—and to have the mission—that great and to him sacred mission—which had come as a legacy from the accumulated riches and the patriotic devotion of Ward.

His heart warmed as he thought of the wonderful opportunity presented him to become the leader of an educational crusade—the greatest the world had ever known; and on behalf of his country—the most prosperous nation on the planet.

He had the time, the fortune and above all the love for America, and devotion to the cause of the whole world's culture, which would make his work under the inspiration of Ward go down through history. Ah! how careful he must be not to err; to keep free from entanglements; to win over the whole American people by the psychological suggestion of intelligent information, . . . calmly and dispassionately, without the trammel of a single fear nor the embarrassment of a single misgiving.

Yes, Ward was right in suggesting that he take a preliminary survey of the length and the breadth of the whole changing scheme of our American States, before really commencing the nobly inspired work. He would go first on to the great Inland Empire of the Northwest, where the heat of the summer was assuaged by the air dancing down in the crispness of its life from the snow-tipped peaks of the forest-clad mountains of those wonderful commonwealths of the Great Imperial Northwest. Then he would brush up beyond into the wide domain of the Canadian States to see how the expatriated Americans viewed their life as a part of the land they had left and the land they had taken over. He had heard that there were none more loyal to England in the peril of the Great War than those sons of America, sometimes representing an American lineage that went back to revolutionary times; and that they had become even more truly Canadian than they had ever been American. wanted to know if this were true-if American citizenship was already becoming a thing to be cast away, even by a few, as had the older citizenships of Europe been thrust aside, the old for the new, during the years of our own upbuilding from the races of the continent beyond. . . . And then he would strike down through those giant centers of the restless, pulsing West, to see their hearts beat in unison with the rest of the American States. About Puget Sound and its queenly cities now coming by modern inventions within calling distance of the mighty awakened East arraying its forces on the shore beyond, what did they think, those brothers of the Northwest? What was their ambition for the land of their birth? What would they do to defend it in the hour of its defense-against an invasion which at the most unexpected time might strike up against them, from the cloud flecked horizon beyond their own fair forest lined shores? What was their part in the great program of patriotic endeavor which he was to grind over giant press cylinders upon the printed page?

And when he had pulsed their sentiment, when he had gathered in the answer and known the truth, then he would go on downward and southward to the lands of other traditions, where the lure of gold rather than the wealth of the forests had called man out from the distant East and up from the farther Latin South, and where they had met—those men of different race, religion and creed—and where they had struggled; and the one had lost and the other had won and conquered by that same Anglo-Saxon impulse of strength and right which was planted as the foundation of our very national existence.

Yes, there too he should inquire and learn. . . . He would read in the story of their social life, the lines that spoke of their love of country. Was it waning or growing? Were those people born from the melting pot, wherein the gold hunter and the rancher—the pioneer farmer and the mountain ranger had all given in, the splendid metals of their own rugged natures—, now that the ease and plenty of another generation had fallen like manna before them for the enjoyment of their descendants—did they, too, like their forbears, conserve any great part of the unyielding strength of those struggling and successful men of that other day?

Yes, he would find out the real answer. He would follow along the whole length of that wonderful fortune land of California, which some day might have to serve with its Pacific Sister States of the North, as a bunker, against the invasion of another nation, a nation which, although it might seem across the Far Western horizon as no larger than a man's hand would some day perhaps develop into a cloud that would long darken the sky of our political hope. . . . He already knew of the activity of those progressive residents of the fair Pacific States—of those of that wonder city which undaunted even by the very heaviest forces of nature-defying the depths of the world below—sprang upright with undaunted courage, and from the ashes and ruins built up a city even more fair and more lovely, and with brow again held proudly high, invited the whole world to come and behold the wonder.

Yes, and he knew of the mettle of that other fair city to the south—, not the city of "The Angels," but of "Our Lady the Queen of the Angels"—and the queen protectress of those sturdy men, who upon the barren waste of a desert edge, planned one of the fairest spots ever beheld by the eyes of man. Plunging out, over and through the deadening heat of the desert, they harnessed up a river, and brought its mountain flood down on and out and over the two hundred long and weary miles of blazing sand, and even then over another fifty miles of trackless lifeless plain, until at last in ten thousand rippling fountains they loosened it upon the thirsting earth, which in response bloomed out in fragrance to delight and nourish man.

Yes, he knew well the wonder working of those of the city of "Our Lady the Queen of the Angels—" how from a mere inland village, they had spread out to the rolling Pacific beyond, tearing down the granite side of mountains to hurl defiance at the sea in a long line of giant walls and then beyond in a surcease from their labors gathering in palatial structures by the tide-washed sands, upon which the waves ehorused their music to dance and merriment, reflecting the gleam of a thousand lights, and echoing the refrain of care-

free, joyous songs.

Oh! the wonder of it all, the—strength of those builders who, after the long weary years of waiting, are now gathered into palaees of mirth and musie, with hands contentedly folded after the labor.

As he reflected, the words of the old man eame back to him; those words like a eall of alarm, as he had uttered them from the depths of the bed of his invalidism.

"Do not let them get soft—this great American people—make them feel that there must be iron in their blood and strength in their hearts. Let them prepare for a day of defense."

Oh! how timely was the old man's warning to these—the great builders—for was not their labor rather one of per-

sonal interest than of public avail?

And thus with such thoughts, O'Rourke in his fancy wandered on along the line of his itinerary—down around the bend of the American frontier with its triumph of the Imperial Valley—on along that bloody borderland of Mexican strife and discontent—a borderland which darkened up like a Chinese wall preventing all growth—all development—all humanizing in the world's behalf, in those rich regions of the farther South, where Indian savagery still prevailed.

What would be our duty toward those weaker races of the South—not only immediately beyond us, but still farther on down between the meandering lines of the two oceans which had by American cunning, through the cleavage of the continent, been brought to a mingling of their waters? And then even beyond that outpost of our political adventure, what would be our duty—toward those, the other nations of the Southern Hemisphere, to which we were so closely united by the needs of national defense. And how did those nations—those other rich nations of that wonderland America of the Southern Cross consider us? Had we inspired its Latin molded peoples with that feeling of respect which alone make nations mutually of use to God and mankind?

O'Rourke put his hands up to his head as if to shut down the working of his mind as he contemplated the enormity of the program of instruction which Ward had mapped out for him.

Where was the compass? Where was the chart? What had the American people ever done to forecast their future—their duty? What had been the actual achievements of each administration as it fell or rose before the voice of the people? Nothing but a vacuous doctrine of a century past, fatuitously warning European nations not to approach our shores—and another short-breathed after-dinner declaration, warning the Eastern world that the gates of the entrance to their harbors should be open to all. A doctrine and a policy. But where was the strength to make them respected?

Where were the armed men—where the ships and mounted cannon to enforce declarations which called defiance to the whole world?

O'Rourke pressed his knuckles up to his temples and bent over—his face buried in his hands.

Then he rose and stood upright—and the look of perplexity had vanished from his face; courage and resolution shown from his eyes.

II SEE AMERICA FIRST

Opening his hand bag, O'Rourke took out a bundle of railroad publications, each advertising the wonderful and always unrivaled attractions of a particular "Scenic Route."

As a practiced writer, he smiled once or twice at the phraseology, but wondered at the extravagance of the colored maps and illustrations and the costliness of the advertising guides which were mostly flouted with for a few moments by the recipients of the supposed favor and then tossed aside to be swept up by the porter.

The slogan of all of the whole array of print was "Sec

America First."

"Yes—see America first—and why not?" reflected O'Rourke. "The railroads need the money and, of course, the traveler should shape his inclination to gratify their own particular needs, regardless of the more proper advice to "See what you can, either at home or abroad as your pocket-book allows, and your inclination in life prompts."

One of the pamphlets fell to the carpet and an obliging individual in the seat opposite picking it up remarked with

a smile:

"It would be better if the railroads put a wee bit more iron in their rails instead of spending their money on ex-

pensive folders."

O'Rourke returned the smile of the stranger, just an American of the same type, which are numbered by millions and which by their adherence to a given mould always astonish the foreigners who first come to our shores—the same smooth shaven face, the same cut of garments—the same style of col-

lar manufactured a billion a year—and the same style of hat and the same sameness of fashions which the American follows with patient doggedness in his changing season worship through the endless labyrinth of conforming to style.

"I am on the road most of the time," remarked the stranger, "and I have never yet found anything in those folders worthy of thought, and being very fond of hundred pound rails and good rock covered ballast beds, instead of cinder beds, I begrudge such deflection of money even though the amount may be comparatively small."

It was an invitation for an argument to which O'Rourke

did not respond and he returned suggestively:

"You are on the road most of the time?"

"Yes. Traveling nearly all the time and on long jumps. How's business?"

"Pretty rotten, thank you," laughed the stranger. "Everything was already going to the bow wows when the war came on and now the war has knocked everything ballywhack. It isn't a question now of how much a man can make—it is a question of how little he may lose. We are in a business which manufactures a real necessity—but now the movies and the autos make up such a program for the American people that they cut out what they can from their necessities to enjoy those crazes."

He waited for O'Rourke to speak and then ran on:

"So I think that this will be my last trip with the line of merchandise which I have handled for twenty years and I will try to get into something along the movie or the auto line, or other new venture that the big combinations haven't got a hold of yet."

"Since the market is now poor here in America, have you ever thought of going abroad for business—say in South

America?" suggested O'Rourke.

"Yes, often—but it is so far off—and what little information we get is too vague to act upon. I am sure, however, if we could ever get started there that we would make a big success; but our government has not even its own public policy definitely fixed abroad—how then can we expect it to help us privately?"

O'Rourke reflected. Here was one of his fellow citizens an apparently intelligent man—who had to give up a productive business at home, and who was, from his standpoint, denied his chance abroad because his government would not

serve his interests.

"I have often wondered why we as Americans are not more farsighted in seeking business chances abroad—and particularly now since the European War takes away almost all competition in South America, and, except for the Japanese, China is now a free field without let or hindrance," remarked O'Rourke.

There was a new tone in the stranger's voice, as he said:

"It is because we are too American, and some day all will
awaken to the fact as I have. I am," he continued, bitterly,

"a man who up to middle age was absolutely successful in
a trade representation which I never thought could fail—
and now—now—I am making my last trip—and why? Because it is our American uncertainty of temperament. . . .

All went well as long as the temper of the people was in a
certain direction and then came the change and—in a few
years—we were lost. Our trouble seems to be," he added
confidentially, "in not being able to standardize our national
existence so as to make it last over a single decade. We
change our modes as we change our spirits and call it progress."

O'Rourke listened. "And even with these continual changes we are 'Chinafying' ourselves, for we only think of

ourselves and nothing of the world about us."

O'Rourke smiled.

The loquacious one hesitated and O'Rourke, to draw him out, asked: "What do you think it really is—this being an American?"

"Thinking, speaking and doing just like every other

American," came the answer.

The men glanced at one of the folders which displayed in large letters: "See America first," and which O'Rourke still

held in his hand.

"That's the trouble—we put America so far to the front, that the whole of the stage is taken up and we can't see anything else before us. A book, a song, a play, even a kindergarten rhyme which spreadeagles is a success—no matter how utterly failing it may otherwise be; but on the contrary, anyone who writes or speaks the most sincere criticism against the United States is un-American and is considered offensively; for we are satisfied with ourselves to such an extent that we will brook no suggestion of interference or criticism."

"You seem to have reflected much on these matters," re-

marked O'Rourke.

"Yes, but rather late in life—in fact—I have only commenced to think this way since my business went to the bad. You see—I prided myself on being one of the real widewinged sort of Americans, who would deride anything that wasn't American and screech away most furiously whenever any chance to brag about America came up. I wonder now that I could have ever been so silly; but one day the change came and it came very suddenly."

"How did it happen?"

"Well, strange as it may seem, although I have had chances to go to Europe, I had never gone, because I always said that my own country was good enough for me, and I rather prided myself on never having been out of my native country, except of course on those obligatory runs that our railroads make through Canada from one American city to another. I prided myself in that regard a good deal as some men do who have never used tobacco or liquor. I thought it was a virtue. I was vainglorious of anything American and hated anything not American, and followed around on my trips across the continent perfectly satisfied with everything, simply because it was American. . . . Well, early this spring I thought that I would run down to Torreon from El Paso with the idea of getting an army contract from the Mexicans. I happened to get there just as they had one of their little miserable battles on, and the result was that I was robbed of everything by the conquering General and had to flee for my life. It took me two weeks and twenty pounds of my flesh to get back to the border. I immediately made my complaint to Washington, expecting that there would be some prompt redress, but finally my attorney informed me that nothing could be done because, under the policy of our government, it was impossible to obtain redress when an American citizen had exposed himself to danger. 'But I was down there on legitimate business,' I declared to my attorney. 'Well,' he said, 'the government has re-fused and that is the end of it.' So now I am for a new America, the sort of an America that can give as well as take blows and that can protect its citizens whether at home or abroad in the proper conduct of their business. And to do this, we ought to know what is going on abroad as much as at home."

They had come to one of the stations—one of the last as the traveler goes westward—that still finds something of the

center of that shifting meeting place where the East of the Old gives way to the New of the West. It was a village neither particularly fair nor yet particularly common-place, scattering out its streets and its half built blocks, in the shambling way characteristic of those older American towns of the plains whose ambitions to become metropoli were sometimes dwarfed before the ink on the maps of their subdividers was dry. But the goldenest fruit of all naturethe rich wheat of a fat and perfect harvest had that yearthe year of blood and war-crept up out of the loamy soil, in glorious abundance and the faded, pathetic, straggling lines of the little village, to O'Rourke became glorified by the fullness of the part it was playing to keep the peaceful parts of the world in surfeit and content. The long processions of the freight cars whose original ugly colors had faded even uglier into muddy tints of dun and drab, became to him things of beauty as they waited by the sides of the elevators to receive their burden of grain. here they were reaping—reaping the golden harvest of a well requited labor-while over yonder in that land he had just left—the land of war and death—the forsaken fields were drenched with blood and the harvest, the only harvest, was that of death's own garnering.

"Ah," he exclaimed aloud, as the comparison dawned in its contrast clearly upon him. "Ah, but it is glorious—this land of peace and plenty. . . . See all this harvest already gathered, and the fields beyond still hang heavy with the golden grain. Ah! what a glorious country—even in this small village showing the fruits of well requited toil and the promise of years of peace and plenty to come. Should we not be thankful that there is in the nature of our land, and much in the hearts of our people to make such scenes of prosperity an actual living example of the folly of

war?

"Peace is glorious," murmured O'Rourke, as his thoughts still went on.

The voice of the stranger sounded cynically.

"I, too, at one time thought as you—that peace and abundance meant the strength of a nation—that when the earth brought forth—that all should have their share of the bounty—but now I believe that condition is changed—, it is no longer a question of resignedly eating bread in the sweat of the brow, but by gathering the bread by the strength of the

hand.... The nations of Europe fight today that they may be assured of peace tomorrow—while we, living along idly and lulled by a false sense of safety, may be plucked aside when we least expect."

The train rolled on out of the village and gathered its speed on down through the yellow fields of uncut grain and

the white stretches of brown stubble.

"It is the Valley of the Red River—the valley which, commencing here in this land of peace and prosperity, spreads northward into that other Northern land, now under the cloud of the war and whose sons are leaving the harvests of the golden grain to go forth into the death harvest of battle."

O'Rourke was talking as to himself; but the stranger heard

and when he had finished spoke:

"But do you not know that we, too, are fighting this war—that this very grain which you see harvested before your eyes, will go to give comfort to the warring nation that can pay for it and take it away—and that the bone and blood of the men who make guns to destroy men, will be fed by this same wheat? Ah—the folly for us to appear to be a neutral peace-

ful people."

O'Rourke did not answer. Perhaps he did not hear all of what was said, but a part still echoed to him from his own thought. He stood there in the vestibule of the train looking out upon the valley—the valley that wended Northward, with its river that flowed away from the sunshine of the South to the frozen fastness of the North. The stranger left him and yet he stood till the gloaming came and then the night—and pondered, the words of the cynic still ringing in his ears, coupling themselves from time to time with that last injunction of Ward.

"Show them that they are soft—that to enjoy peace they must prepare for war," and finally as they rattled over the span of the Red River—and as the lights of Fargo flashed through the window of the car, he steadied himself and, bowing his head as if taking an obligation, he murmured,

"God helping me I will—I will."

III A COINCIDENCE OF TRAVEL

In the early morning of the next day O'Rourke looked out from the window upon the strange contortions of rock and earth which marked the expanse of the Bad Land's domain, whose dreariness and sinister appearance even the euphonious name of Pyramid Park cannot dispel, but forever wonderful in its orphanage in the lap of Nature. He was the first one in the observation car. Idly he followed the panorama of the hills and buttes that wriggled up out of the plains. By the time they had come to Pompey's Pillar the observation car was filling with passengers, the cynic at length appearing.

"Along the line of our American talk of war and misery yesterday," he remarked, "it is quite a coincidence that we apparently have on the train an European noblewoman. She has all of the sections in my Pullman reserved for the exclusive use of herself and her servants." He laughed and added, "Evidently milady does not think much of American train companions for she has not once left her state room, although her companion and maid and man servant seem

to be quite busy attending to her wants."

O'Rourke suppressed a yawn.

The matter did not interest him. He never did care for small talk anyhow.

After awhile he arose and went into one of the smoking

rooms.

He seated himself, taking a magazine and lighting a cigar. During the short time that he was there, someone came and went. . . . He did not look up to see, but after a few moments suddenly found placed almost directly before him a magazine—not one of those in its leather folder—such as the railroad supplied—but a very new magazine lying face downward—as though someone had turned it over to hold a place in its reading. . . .

Mechanically—hardly thinking what he did—and not at all for the moment wondering why the magazine should have been left so close to him, by some one perhaps who had just left the compartment, O'Rourke thrust aside the monthly he was reading and took up the other, . . . at the page

where it was left open.

A photograph stared out at him—the face of a man he well knew by name,—the face of a foreigner—who had entered closely into his life. . . . All awake he read the in-

scription underneath.

"Dom Pedro Araldo, multi-millionaire, who was killed by snipers while the guest of French army officers on the Aisne front. His widow, the famed prima donna, former wife of Timothy O'Rourke, distinguished American author, has left France for permanent residence in America. The will of the deceased makes her one of the richest of women."

O'Rourke's eigar dropped from his fingers to the floor;

limply he fell back into the chair.

What! his former wife-now a widow and traveling in

America!

"Bah—it's nothing to me," he finally asserted. "I am sorry for her loss and wish her well, and I am sure that she will be discreet enough never to let our paths cross."

For a long time he sat while memories poured back upon

him.

He tried to prevent it—but still the flood of recollection burst out—and in a moment the comparison was there—those two women, . . . the one who had been his wife, whom he for the love of her art in the guilessness of his youth had protected and advanced and educated until she had become the first prima donna of all Europe. Oh! the sacrifices that he had made to elevate her to greatness; and when at last it had come, only, did he see her as she was—a woman genius, unsexed it seemed by ambition and desire for public recognition. But through it all she had been a good woman—that softened his heart toward her—she had been good as far as woman's chastity goes, in all her scheming, as rung after rung she had climbed the frail shaking ladder of success. Yes—for her he would never have anything but good wishes. . . .

But compared to the other— How different! . . . Athena with a nature as delicate as an orchid's fragrance and a heart as effusive as a mountain rill. He was glad that he had been thus forewarned by that mysterious magazine. Now he would be able to follow her comings and goings and thus avoid her. He was sure that she would not seek him out. . . . Now that she was famous and rich she would have

the distraction of great social pursuits—her comings and goings would be forever heralded in the papers-she would be adulated as a genius and a woman of fabulous wealth. Yesshe evidently considered money, success, and he was glad for her in its possession.

With a lurch of the train a tall, overgroomed figure ap-

peared at the compartment.

O'Rourke gave a start. . . . It was the same man who had waited behind him when he had bought his ticket at New York; he could never mistake him; the same relaxed, perfectly composed face, but with shifting eyes as if listening to a command. . . . But it was the same—the same; so foreign in appearance in spite of his American ready made expensive suit—, he was probably French—or Latin at all

The man inclined himself slightly—then stiffened and with a military precision and order of gesture, tendered O'Rourke a sealed letter with his name addressed in a hand which he well knew.

As in a trance he slowly worked it open and read:

"Now that you know that I am free-please follow my PRIMA." man to me. I am traveling incognito.

Hardly knowing what he did, O'Rourke followed the man. She stood looking out from between two curtains which she had caused to be hung up in the section to further add to her privacy. They were not the ordinary Pullman draperies-coarse and heavy and made to wear, . . . but light swinging draperies of a gauzy yet opaque cloth which, by the subduance of the light, made even the tawdry, garish interior of the train apartment look pleasing.

For a moment in the sudden change from the glare of the barren highlands to the rose-like softness of her shaded reservation, he did not perceive her as she peered out at him from the draperies, while he stood breathing in the fragrance of the fresh flowers which were banked about the walls as thick as in a garden. He found himself wondering just for a moment at the extravagance of the costly floral display.

Then the curtains opened wider and he saw her, . . . saw her standing full before him; the light from without silhouetting the white of her shapely arms setting the beauty of her face in a cameo relief against the shadow on the velvet drape beyond. . . . Never had she appeared more lovely to him; standing there her hair—the hair he knew so well with its texture of silk and its glow of gold and ebonwound with studied carelessness about her smooth white brow, lightly shading those eyes of wondrous depth, now, as full and open and innocent as woodland violets.

He looked spellbound-breathing deeply of the heavy yet exhiliarating air fragrant with the breath of rose and orchid. Her simple garments of heavily embroidered linen and costly lace whose clinging lines caressing her graceful form, stiffened here and there with half concealed ribbons of silk. brought out the perfect cast of her limb and body, as she lightly balanced herself with the movement of the train.

Neither spoke—but both stood looking at each other—not wonderingly—for there was a defiance in his look which brought from her first a mute expression of defense then only of appeal, softening the tense expression on her face. Her only sign of emotion was the heaving breast whose alabaster lines beneath the shapely throat played in shadows with the rise and fall of her breath.

She had both hands gathered up on a level with her head. He watched them, as the shapely fingers—with nails like rose petals, deep and perfect—but with none of the vulgar over gloss of hair-shop manicures—dug the curtains into creases and folds. . . . There was none of her wealth of jewels upon them—only a thin little bracelet, his first gift to her—clung pathetically to that wondrous arm—as though the gold itself was in adoration of the warmer beauty of her olive skin.

His eyes rested long on the bracelet and there was tenderness in his glance, . . . but when he again looked at her a new defiance shot forth before which her own eyes dropped.

"Well!" came his voice—heavy in its challenge.

She winced and then in a moment-broke out into a ripple of subdued laughter and motioning him further, closed the door behind them, . . . then after she had let her laughter spend itself in musical ripples, throwing herself down on

the couch opposite him she began:

"Ah, my poor little lamb. So you are afraid that I have followed you to steal you. N'est ce pas? Ha! Ha! Ha! Can't a clever author like you—a romancer, ever believe that coincidences may actually sometime happen in real life as you make them happen in your novels? Ha! Ha! can you not believe that our happening to be on this same train together is a perfectly natural coincidence. Bah! By the way you looked at me just now, anyone would think that you believed that I might be interested in you. Ah— No— Ha! Ha! my little sheep—mon petit mouton—do not fear. The cruel lady who followed you and loved you so long has now rather forgotten you. Do you not know that she has become quite one of the richest women and that she could buy this whole railroad system and a big slice of your wild America and then have enough to spare? Bah— Your conceit is quite insufferable."

She paused.

"See here—Monsieur O'Rourke—do you not think that the look you just now gave me was quite unpardonable, particularly to one like myself, who, as you know, judges humanity more by looks and actions than by words."

O'Rourke raised his hand protestingly and murmured, "I

meant no disrespect."

She gave him a long, piercing glance and her dry throat pulsed and throbbed—but he did not realize her perturba-

tion, for she quickly covered it with a laugh.

"Ha! Ha! Monsieur meant no disrespect. What a complaisant gentleman he is getting to be— No disrespect—Ha! Ha! so he confesses that he did think that I was following to steal him—the poor dear little lamb."

She tapped the floor with her shapely foot from whose slipper came the gleam of clustered diamonds. And then with a sudden resolution turned to him, throwing off her

bantering Latin way-

"See here, Tim! Don't you know that everything is absolutely all over with us as far as sentiment is concerned, but that we still may have each others' respect and can be as brother and sister? Are you going to be a cad—and refuse to help me forget the troubles I have been through—and comfort me on this maddening rail journey by a little well behaved and formal society?

He looked at her askance as she continued:

"O, there you go—the only hard words I ever said to you were when you would get into those obstinate moods."

She squared herself around toward him.

"What—do you mean to tell me that you will not offer me—with a whole heart—your attention and assistance on this journey—as you would to the most casual sort of a decent woman traveling entirely alone? Is all your old boasted American gallantry gone—and I, a foreigner and stranger in this, your much vaunted native land, where a woman's word is law?"

O'Rourke still leaned over with bowed head, his hands

upon his knees-silent.

She gave a little wave of the hands to conceal her impatience and then rested one knee up lightly on the edge of the opposite seat and with one hand upon her side, leaned the other hand against the wall.

Suddenly the train gave a light roll and lurch and she

was pitched over upon him.

"Âny harm done?" he asked sympathetically, as he helped her up.

She nursed her knee reflectively for a moment and then

smilingly said:

"No—just a slight knee bruise—no harm I am sure and perhaps some good."

She saw that he was thawing.

"Yes, good—for do you know that your little help and sympathy just now—relieves me a great deal—for I am sure that your old kindness toward everyone is still alive—and," she waved her hand, "now we are sure that there is none of the ancient sentiment—left—that it has been killed—been absolutely annihilated."

"Sure, you say?" asked O'Rourke.

"Yes—" she responded with a positive dip of her chin. "Yes, absolutely."

"Why?" asked O'Rourke.

"Well—you know how much attention I pay to little things—how my whole life has been one of drawing conclusions from details?"

"Now," she continued to explain, "when I was just a moment ago thrown into your arms and we were all mixed up together in the mishap, had I had any sentiment toward you, I am sure that I would have felt it. I know that you have none, for were it so, I would immediately know. I understand you so well."

O'Rourke sighed.

"Yes—it is true. We have known each other very well."

"Yes—and in a lover way, which is now passed—but why can't we still be friends—at least until the horrid journey is over. Why can't we be traveling companions—now that we are sure that the other is all over?"

O'Rourke quickly reflected. "Yes, why not?" He knew

that he did not care for her—and since evidently she didn't care for him, what could be the harm in showing a little attention to her needs on the journey? He was quite sure that Athena would approve of it—really he had been foolish in his boorish manner toward his former wife and, although the situation was very novel, it was at all events eminently respectable and proper.

Still there was something in O'Rourke which rebelled.

She hurried on, noting his hesitation.

"And then I can perhaps be of some use to you—that is—if you are anything like you used to be—always getting people's opinions and viewpoints—for here I, a French woman in this new land—may look at things from an angle

which may interest you."

That settled O'Rourke. He saw the opportunity. Shethe brilliant woman whose mind, adaptable as quick silver, ran at a gallop and worked like lightning-she with her broad minded impressionableness—how useful her companionship could be to him in trying to find out the real temper of the American people. . . . Customs, habits, manners, ways new to her but old to him, would come under her observation: her lightest comment would prove another straw to show him how the political weather vane might turn, . . . the man trying to take the blood pressure of the whole American people. . . . There was no brain, he argued, that could be more helpful to him, even if it was that of a woman. a natural deep analytic mind she had from her girlhood studied history and politics much as other girls had read novels and romances, and had profoundly cultivated her thought in a wide width of the broad field of human endeavor. One day when asked how she interpreted her historic grand opera roles with such deep feeling, he remembered that she had replied:

"When I sing I must not only feel the heart beats of the role itself, but the whole racial tradition which set that heart

in motion."

Yes—she would be of great use to him, . . . for not only was she familiar with the world's history as none other whom he had ever known, but as a persistent newspaper reader in the several languages which she spoke to perfection, she was really, he was sure, more familiar on current questions than he himself, particularly now since her retirement from the triumphs of the operatic stage, she had sufficient leisure to

indulge in her passion for political study, doubly excited by reason of the epoch making inspirations of Europe's war of carnage. Although she had only appeared in America twice, she had always, on account of her marriage to O'Rourke, been deeply interested in that country, and her comparative ideas would be consequently of very great benefit to him.

His decision was sudden but irrevocably conclusive.

"Please consider me at your service," he said quite simply.

A look of joy overspread her face, but suppressing it as she for a moment stooped down for a flower, she drew the costly orchid through his lapel.

"I accept your service and declare you my companion

knight errant."

IV "BIG AMERICA"

They were at luncheon, served privately in one of her compartments.

She waved her hand toward a great waste of land upon whose rocky soil the skeletons of struggling, withering shrubs blended their grey with the dreary tone of the arid plains as they reached out and upward to the distant mountains.

"I suppose that here in America you are even proud that your deserts are big," she remarked, as she surveyed the scene.

The thought cut O'Rourke, but he let her go on.

"Yes—that's what impresses me more than anything else in America—your idea of the perfect is anything big. If a mountain is big—even if it has nothing to charm the eye and is a detriment rather than a benefit in its arid mass to the country about—then to you it is pleasing; if a river looks big, in a watery expanse, no matter how shallow and ugly it is, it is wonderful, because it seems big. A building; a street, a man, even a potato must be with you big, in order to be excellent. Bigness with you is the all-in-all desirability of life—and in seeking bigness you find your ideals in mere size and quantity.

She laughed.

"I don't know how many times I have been told by Amer-

icans I have met how many small, insignificant countries like France or England or Germany your big United States could hold and now that I see what your great West is, I don't wonder that you fix on bigness as your great desideratum—for just mere bigness—is much of all that you have in this much vaunted land."

O'Rourke winced. She noticed, and seemingly enjoyed his

discomfiture, for she quickly continued:

"Ah, now you see in just one little particular where your ideals of bigness have failed to hold entirely to the big plan you set up for everything about you—you the great big people—with the great big rivers and the great big mountains and the great big cities with the great big buildings—and a great many other big things, not to forget the great big tasteless potatoes, . . . you haven't yet made yourself big enough to stand a little criticism. You have made your country appear so big that you yourself seem very small—for your country is really too big for you and you have never grown up to it and it doesn't seem if you keep on in your present narrow-minded, self-sufficient way that you ever will."

O'Rourke nervously toyed with his fork.

"See," she continued, "it makes your cheeks flush to have me talk that way—but it is good for you—it is good for all Americans to have deductions made concerning them—that is to say, if there is really such a thing as identifying anyone as an American.

O'Rourke collected himself and let her continue.

"Yes, what is an American? Naturally one would think that it was any person born in North, Central or South America—but this you deny and declare that you—you the great big people of the U. S. A., with all these great big things are the only real article—that you alone are the sole Americans on the whole American continent."

O'Rourke wondered that during the entire period of their married life she had never thus before expressed herself. She seemed to divine his thought and continued as in ex-

planation.

"Oh, it takes courage on the part of even a French woman to 'size up,' as you call it, these Great Big States. When I was working for success—and then only out of deference to the dear American gentleman who was my husband—I never talked any sort of politics—but now, for your own

good as my gracious traveling companion, and to compensate you for your companionship—I feel that it is my duty to tell you something about what I think of this great big country."

"Well, what are your conclusions?" asked O'Rourke, try-

ing to force a smile.

"Well, as to your people—I won't have to say much, for even in our school books we learn as children that out of every ten great big American citizens, there is always one who is a Negro. Of course the Negro is not considered to be very large, but some day you will find out that he is quite a big fellow, big enough to be reckoned with; . . . then as to the other American citizens, there are two or three who are not much better than Negroes—and there you have it—the great American people—who even haven't got enough patriotism to have a decent army, and whose few little soldiers are paid like our laborers at home,—so much by the hour for their sterling services.

It was hard, but O'Rourke still listened.

"And then as to your country. It all seems to me that when God got around to making America he used only his roughest tools, for there is not yet a single finished, completed effect that I have seen in all your much boasted nature. Even the color effects of your landscapes seem to be laid on with a whitewash broom rather than a brush."

"Wait until you see the Yellowstone Park," returned

O'Rourke, recovering himself.

"Yes, I will wait—and in the meantime, I will say no more—for I think that you have had enough for to-day—your face is as red as a red pippin and you actually look as if you wished that I was a man so that you might strike me."

O'Rourke attempted a laugh. In the silence which fol-

lowed, his reflections were active.

Poignant as was his feeling at the diatribe, he reflected that she was the product of the oldest civilization of the Occident, a patrician of the Latin races whose blood still beat with the impulses of the ancient Romans. Her French point of view, although it was embittered against Americans for some cause which he could not divine, would be valuable to him. . . . He calmed himself and resolved to get whatever benefit he could from her deep witted criticism.

He looked toward her in answer to a laugh.

With her fork she was hammering away upon the jacket

of a giant potato which had just been placed before her on the table.

"Ha! Ha!" she laughed. "See how truthfully I have spoken—for I was just reading from the bill of fare how this railroad was noted for what? not for its safe means of transportation, not for its comfort and convenience; but for its 'great big baked potatoes.' Ha! Ha! is it not ridiculous. Big and baked at that! Isn't it a wonderful combination?"

Daintily, without touching the vegetable with her fingers, she dug with her fork deep down into it—and her lips showed full and red against the white pulp of the tuber as

she nibbled it.

"Tastes quite savage like—something like a boiled-out dinner of wild herbs. Now, in France you know how we used to love our little potatoes—those savory little ones, the ones I used to cook for you, those delicious little ones which the gardener, instead of trying to grow merely big and mammoth, tried to cultivate into richness of flavor."

She mockingly sighed and then added.

"Oh—what treason it must be here in this land of bigness not to rave over things just because they are big. Oh! A kingdom for some real little, small potatoes in this giant land, ravishing with its bigness."

And she waved her hand in an expression of mock despair and laughed a long, rippling laugh, in which, however,

O'Rourke did not very heartily join.

V AN AMERICAN SOLDIER

Dom Pedro's widow was very agreeable on the rest of the way to Livingstone, where they were to leave the main line to enter the Park at Gardner. Although she did not say so in actual words, her manner indicated.

"Excuse me, please. I know that I was very nasty in criticising your America as I did, but I had a reason, . . .

I had a reason."

What her reason could have been O'Rourke never tried to divine, counterbalancing the effect of the national insult by thinking that this original minded genius of a woman was at all events giving him new angles of thought, which

might eventually serve him in his great purpose.

It was only when they left the train at Livingstone, that he again saw the mysterious man servant who had delivered the note, and whom he was already beginning to doubt he had seen at New York, so plausible had been Prima's explanation of the coincidence of the meeting, Prima being the name by which he always thought of her and the nickname which he had given her in the first year of their acquaintance, in recognition of her ambition to become a Prima Donna.

This time the man servant, trim and militarily immaculate in the blouse, cap and leggings of a Parisian chauffeur, sat at the wheel of a great touring car.

Prima eyed it rather disdainfully and then explained:

"I had to leave my own French car at New York. It was impossible to get it here on time. This is just one they have provided me with. Pity that they couldn't have done any better."

She hesitated before getting in and then further explained: "Now you will know the real reason why I have asked you to be with us—for you are the only one of my party who knows anthing about this part of America. Please give the man directions as to what he is to do. You now see how helpless I should be without you."

She turned to a cultivated elderly looking woman whom O'Rourke had not as yet noted as being a member of her

retinue, and said simply:

"This is a traveling companion. She will go with us as chaperon—as soon as I have fixed a place for the servants to wait for me."

O'Rourke entered immediately into the arrangements for the tour, settled for the transportation of the servants to the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel, where they were to wait for instructions from their mistress, and then in a little while they were bowling along over the road that led through the canyon to the Park.

Prima was delighted with the exhilaration of the drive after the confinement on the dusty train and her spirits rose with her color. Coming to Mammoth Hot Springs, they suffered the delay necessary to obtain the permit to enter with the machine.

"This is the first year that they have ever allowed auto-

mobiles in the Park, for the roads are narrow and in a few places dangerous, and they fear that the horses will, when frightened by the cars, bring mishaps to the tourists. As it is, only autos which are privately owned are allowed entrance," explained O'Rourke.

"Well, why don't they get rid of their horses then?" asked Prima. "Here is a place called the 'Wonderland of the World' and the 'Big Thing' of a boastedly progressive nation, and yet only horses are allowed as the means of trans-

portation. What are all those soldiers doing?"

"They are here to guard the Park," answered O'Rourke. "Ha! Ha! Do they think that anyone would steal it—and do you have such a large army that you can make mere mountain guards out of your troops?"

"There used to be Indians here," returned O'Rourke.

"Indians—Ha! Ha! twenty or thirty years ago, and still the soldiers are here—to protect the precious park from the Indians. How wonderfully up-to-date you really are here in America."

They finally got their permit.

"What is that money you have been paying?" asked Prima.

"O, that is the exaction for the permit."

"What! do you mean to say that in this Park which you tell me is for all the people that you have to pay to ride through?"

O'Rourke pretended not to hear as he studied his per-

mit schedule.

"Go on, Gustave," she petulantly commanded of the chauffeur in retaliation for O'Rourke's silence.

O'Rourke held up his hand.

"We can't go yet—we must wait until the time of the schedule commences. You see, we have to leave at a certain time and get to the next stopping at another certain time, and we have yet a half an hour to wait before we go.

Prima's classic chin went up in disgust.

"Do you mean to tell me that in this land of the free and this place of a nation's entertainment that you are bound down by exactions which hold you to a time table?"

"Those are the rules," responded O'Rourke.

"Well, I think that your free U. S. A. should come over to Europe and take a few lessons in human liberty. It seems that we have been going ahead while America—at least this United States part of it—has been standing still or going behind. Who ever heard of such a contradictory government?"

That night after their dinner, they went up for a second visit to the formations of the Mammoth Hot Springs and Prima was lost in admiration of their many details.

A soldier was standing by the edge of the limpid turquoise of Jupiter's giant pool. He smiled awkwardly, but engaging-

ly as they came up.

"Have ye ben up yeonder?" he asked, jerking his thumb

back toward the terraces on the hills behind.

O'Rourke answered pleasantly, but in polite discouragement of the acquaintance, when Prima, looking at the awkward figure in ill fitting blue, said:

"Oh, you are one of the soldiers?"

"Yes'um," responded the man with eager alacrity. "Was ye wishen to see the forimations?"

"O! please do take us to them," answered Prima and then

whispered to O'Rourke.

"Bravo! At last I have a chance to study at near view one of your brave American soldiers—do please let us go with him."

She gave one backward look at the emerald clearness of the vapory pool whose green waters played rainbow with the red, yellow and purple splashes on the ivory sides of the terrace and then the three with the bright moonlight reflecting from the white calcine at their feet, followed after the soldier.

"This here place is what us soldiers calls Dead Man's Breath," and he pointed down to a deep fissure in the ground, from which the odor of noisome fumes was venting.

The soldier looked at Prima admiringly.

"It's nice that you're wearing such nice perfume. That

hole there don't smell so bad when ye're around."

He rambled along as they followed him over the waste. "Them pools back there are turrible deep and hot. There was a feller fell into one wunce, and when they got him out, the fleash jest pealed off with his clothes. This here Yellowstone Park has some turrible things in it and they don't have nothin' like it in Europe."

Prima gasped.

"Oh, how dreadful! I'm glad we don't have such things in Europe. If we did we surely would protect them so that the people couldn't fall in the boiling water."

"Wall, ye see, Missus, we can't do that here in Amurica, because this is a free country an' a man can go an' come when he wants."

"Ah!" remarked Prima, "evidently you are an American, not only from the way you talk, I should judge, but also because you are a soldier—for I presume that every soldier in the American army must be an American."

The double-barreled suggestion puzzled him for a moment, but finally he unraveled it and got the hold to the end of the

string.

"Yes, I'm Amurican. We always have ben Amurican as fur back as we can remember. My father wuz in the Civil War."

"Ah, really. But that was quite recent, wasn't it?"

"Yes, but we go way back further than that. Grandad come from som'ers back in New York—York State he uster call it—and my! but the old man was strong agin them Eurepeyan countries. Yesir, we're Amuricans all right. His father fought in the War of the Revolution."

"Ah, how interesting. You're a military family then?"

"Yes'um, an' I 'spose that's the reason I'm wearing this uniform—now. I want big enough to enlist in the war with Spain—so I thought, that as long as jobs was gettin' pretty scarce in our town, that them thirteen dollars saved up every month was better than loafing around home—and, besides—ef you're an Amurican soldier you get a chance to travel around the whole world an' mebbe git a pension."

"But do you never think of the possibility of war and of

the danger to your life?"

"O, we Amuricans ain't fools enough to ever git into any war."

"Well, why do you have any army at all then?"

"O, just because every government has just got to have some sort of an army. But here in Amurica we don't have to depend upon no army. No'um—why don't you know that at Washington they've got secrets which would just murder the whole world ef they turned them loose? What do we want an army for when we can fight the world with 'lectricity, and gasses, and submarines?'

He threw out his arms in emphasis of his grandiloquence and the rapt look on Prima's face led him along further into

the narrative of his country's prowess.

"An' don't you know," he enthused, "that we've got

ingines invented in Washington that will kill off a whole regiment just by themselves—that don't have to have no soldiers—they just shoot by themselves an' mow everything down. All we have to do is to stay about ten miles away and load the shells on flat cars, while that there ingine keeps on spoutin red hot steel all by itself."

"But I would think," suggested Prima, her eyes sparkling with merriment, "that eventually the enemy would likewise discover the use of these terrible engines, so that finally when the opposing machines had destroyed each other, men after

all would have to fight just the same."

"Don't you believe it," exclaimed the other loftily. "Them Eurepeyans is too slow for us-we'd get 'em someway or other if they ever tried any monkeydoodle business on us."

"Well, since you have such wonderful mechanical protection, why should you want even the small army you have?" asked Prima with an innocent raising of her black eyebrows.

"Why I suppose to help out the militia fellers."

"Who are they?"

"Oh, a lot of dudes who take their vacations soldiering. My, but it would make you laff to see what kids they are. They don't even know how to wear their cartridge belts."

"But they can shoot, can't they?"

"Ha! Ha! Shoot? Why they don't even know how to take care of their guns. See, I've got a medal for shootin'an' las' summer they had me detailed at the general camp to help try to show them fellers how to shoot. I don't know when I first commenced to shoot—an' I thought I could show them fellers how-but you can't show them nothing for they don't know nothing to commence on-an' in order to shoot right, ye got to know somethin' to commence on.

Prima shook her head dubiously.

"Ah, you mean that there should be some preliminary

training?"

"Yes-, sech as all us kids used to get at home-shooting from the time we was babies-that's what's made Amurica win all her wars-because some of us know how to shoot. That's why we won at Bunker Hill an' at them other places and that's why we won in 1812 and in the Mexican War and the Civil War and the Spanish War-because the Amuricans can shoot an' are the best shots in the world."

"But they say that the rifle is getting to be a rather small weapon to win battles with."

"Don't you believe it—they're making them better every day."

"Do your companions feel as you do?"

"Sure. Those that know anything at all. The only trouble is that there are a bunch of lummies in the army that come in jest to get warm and fed. The last rookies that come couldn't make a soldier any more than you could. Ye see, the recruiting sargent says that it's gettin' pretty hard to get recruits now—since they know they can't run away when they want too; for they're pretty sure to get ye, now if ye want to go back to yer trade."

O'Rourke walked silently along, his heart sickening, but

with no rebellion against Prima for her questioning.

He himself well knew the doleful conditions of our historic army-conditions that even its splendid achievements could not conceal. Had it not always been more or less of a political aggregation rather than a military organization, dominating politics not only in time of war, but even in peace (through its pensioners), whipping its boastful influence over the raw back of the patient South? Made up of brave men individually valiant, yes, heroic . . . in time of war, had not the eventual army become collectively in times of peace, a mere Bombastes Furioso finally miniatured down to a blustering pigmy which alone took itself seriously before the convex mirror of its own conceit? Yes, he himself knew the conditions of our American army; how by tradition, by environment, by trend of industrial and commercial development an American soldier in time of peace had to continually seek an excuse for his employment; he was a parasite, looked upon by many as a needless extra extravagance whose only duties, now that the Indians were gone, was to give our West Point graduates some sort of occupation in their control; that our army was nothing but a sort of an expensive clinic maintained for the instruction of the political pathologists of Congress, in representation of American patriotism, which was not quite sure as to whether it wanted an army or not; that its rare efforts at police control in times of strikes had not shown it to be any more efficient than a posse of armed civilians, and finally that its tremendous expense and inefficient showing was making it a joke among the other nations of the earth.

He looked curiously at the soldier walking before him and recognized in him the type he knew so well. He compared him with his good natured volubility, bursting up out of the fretting routine of the day, to that other type, . . . of Europe and Japan, who when they wore the uniform were silent automatons of discipline, and who as soldiers were eternally busy with everyone of those twenty-four hours a

day.

Yes, undoubtedly the man could shoot; the medal on his breast proved that, . . . and there was no question but what if he were left to himself in a skirmish to do what he wanted in his American way, that he would give a very good account of himself. O'Rourke thought and then smiled at the memory of a remark made to him by a distinguished general of the Civil War, who had had a large control over our army down to that very day.

"Our American soldier is the best in the whole world for even after all his officers are killed off, he has the brain and the independence and courage to keep on fighting."

"Yes, that would be all right," ran on O'Rourke, in his reflections, "all right if we never had any but Indians to fight—but now, Oh, the folly of this great American people with the carnage of machine battle just beyond that strip of grey water. Oh, the folly of persisting to think that our way is right when just beyond with their blood and their lives they are proving that it is not."

A question formed itself in O'Rourke's mind; but he for a moment hesitated to ask the soldier. It seemed so useless,

and then he knew what the answer would be.

"What else do you learn in the army besides shooting?" at length asked O'Rourke.

"Why, we got to learn the manual of arms and then we drill. There are a lot of other things I can't just remember."

"And discipline. Do they teach what discipline means?" he further asked.

"Do you mean obeying orders?"

"Not only that, but being made to know that you are in charge of a link in a chain, a long chain, . . . that goes so far that you yourself can not know what is necessary to hold it unbroken, . . . a long chain in which every link is a human mind, . . . a chain for the safety of all. Do you know that an absolute attention to the perfect and responding condition of your particular link in that chain may be sometime the most essential thing in the whole world to you as a soldier?"

"Oh, you mean that we must all hold together. Sure—they don't have to teach us that—everyone with any common sense would know that he has to obey orders."

"But orders from whom?"

"From the non coms-"

"And the officers?"

"Oh, we don't see much of the officers—except a shavetail now and then, who airs himself a good deal for the first few months when he comes from West Point. You see, they are officers who stay in their offices—an' it's the non coms that does the ordering. That's the reason they call them officers because—they don't have nothin' to do but stay in their offices."

O'Rourke smiled sadly.

There in a nutshell was expressed a certain percentage opinion of the American people on the American officer; an "officer in an office," just like any other salary grabber, living on the bounty of the people, giving nothing, receiving everything, idle, almost profligate, sojourning in splendid garrisons, padding out his already sufficient pay with fogies and extras, commissary and quartermaster concessions in the shape of store privileges—a parasite digging into the fat of the American treasury. Yes, that was the unjust estimate of many.

And then his mind pictured before him the real army officer; a man whose patriotism and love of military life had led him to make a professional choice which he knew would be hard through life, . . . with its continually broken ties, its restrictions, its hardships and its dangers; a man chosen and picked by the severest physical and mental tests, which were unrelentingly repeated throughout the whole period of his company, troop or battery command; a man whose career was centered in the hope that some day he might be able to serve his country, when in alarm it would turn to him, rudely awakened from its long dream of immunity from war, the man whom the people thought to be a mere office holder in times of peace—but who in reality was the only fixed sentinel to whom they could look for leadership in time of national danger.

The comparison flashed through O'Rourke's mind and then

he said:

"In Europe now, they are fighting so that every man as a human link has got to be as good as every other link in

the chain, or else he is thrust aside. Every man must follow as a link in the chain wherever the chain goes, . . . if it goes through a powder magazine and becomes even red hot while there, he must still follow it; for if his single link fails then the whole chain would be broken."

The soldier was interested but skeptical.

"Supposing that some one should ask you to go into a powder mill where you knew that there would be a small, perhaps a very small chance of your ever coming back alive."

The answer came direct.

"Such an order wouldn't be reasonable—and nobody has

to obey an order that ain't reasonable."

"But the chain has to be held together to check the enemy. Someone must take care of each link, some links for the time being in safety and then at another time in danger, . . . if you should refuse to go, then your link would be broken and the whole chain destroyed and thousands of your comrades slain. . . . Don't you think that it would be reasonable to expect you to do your duty as well as the others?"

"Yes. But that's in Europe, and here in Amurica they

don't do such foolishness."

Prima smiled and in a moment had dismissed the topic which she had so cleverly introduced, by asking:

"What is this cute little thing?"

"O! that's just a little geyser," responded the soldier, and he himself became silent with them, as there in the moonlight they stood, listening to the boiling of the miniature geyser, perfect in every outline but hardly larger than a barnacle; yet spewing and vaporing along in an important busy way.

Prima leaned down close and listened long at the edge of

the bubbling creation.

"Ah, it is singing, singing so sweetly," she exclaimed and

a deep look spread over her face.

"Oh! how much more wonderful it is with its delicate little song than that other big hideous rasping geyser beside it. I should think that they would protect this sweet little singer by putting a rail about it, for a single heavy footstep might crush it in."

"O, it isn't big enough to bother about," said the soldier, looking at it disdainfully.

Prima looked at O'Rourke and they both laughed, although O'Rourke's laugh was very faint.

The soldier did not join in the laugh-; he only again

looked at the tiny, singing bubbler, . . . looked at it, and

then wondered why they laughed.

Then O'Rourke's expression became deeply serious and when the soldier said good-bye he drew himself up and gravely saluted.

And it was Prima then who wondered.

VI THE LOST ART OF WALKING

"Why do we meet no pedestrians?" asked Prima of O'Rourke the next morning, as the car whirred them along past the grotesque Hoodoo Rocks, the drab and green setting of the Silver Gate and then on beyond where the Golden Gate reflected on its beetling side the gilding of the joyous sun.

"I have wondered at that myself," returned O'Rourke. "I must confess that as a people, we do not cultivate the art of walking as they do in Europe."

"Don't the American students make up tramping

parties?"

"No, here the distances are considered rather too far for walking."

"But they are likewise far in Europe. Europe is almost as large as the whole of America and if you consider only

the habitable parts, is very much larger."

"The fact is that many Americans consider their time to be more valuable than the exercise that they get from the walking."

"How do Americans exercise then?"

"Oh, various sports-base ball is the chief of all."

"Yes, but no one exercises at a base ball game except the few players and everybody pays to see them exercise, as if it were a rare treat."

O'Rourke smiled at her ingenuousness; the thought nailed itself into his mind.

"Even," she continued, "in their effete days the ancient Romans of the most patrician class prided themselves on their daily physical exercise, and even we Frenchwomen believe a daily walk to be as essential as our daily bread, and as for the Germans—bah—les Boches—I wish that they hadn't exercised so much."

She pouted:

"Why even your farmers don't seem to want to walk," and she pointed at a fellow scraping and mending the road with a wooden drag, upon which he stood bumping along most desperately, instead of enduring the easier advance of

walking.

"On the whole distance from New York on here, through all those farms we passed in the many different states, I rarely saw a farmer walking—he was always seated on some sort of a machine. In Europe, the farmers walk from morning till night. That's the reason, perhaps, why our grains and vegetables are more savory and our fruits more toothsome. They are personally conducted in their growth."

She gave a quick glance at O'Rourke and then added:

"And then in your cities everybody has the shoes so ridiculously polished—that I am sure that none of you ever walk very much—and, besides, everyone seems to be waiting for cars. . . . Why, you know so well how in Paris, a long stroll is one of the chief delights of the Parisian, in spite of the fact that we have the most moderate and best transportation imaginable and cabs are almost as cheap as your murderous death traps of trolleys."

"You can hardly compare America with any other coun-

try," mildly remarked O'Rourke.

"That's the trouble with you Americans. That's why Europeans smile after you have boastingly left their circle. . . . You claim to have a land which is so entirely different from any other part of the planet, that you can do absolutely as you wish and still be perfect from your own self-satisfied standpoint."

She paused and then reverted. "Do you mean to tell me

that there are no pedestrians in this Park?"

"I have been through a couple of times and never recollect having seen any."

She looked at him disdainfully.

"And you call this a Park for the enjoyment of all the people? Have the Americans no longer any legs? What is

a poor man to do if he wants to see the Park?"

"The poor man hasn't any chance at all to see it," confessed O'Rourke. "For the cheapest tour arranged by the government means nearly a week's time and four times a

week's wages, in money, even starting from the edge of the Park itself. You see it is nearly one hundred and fifty miles

around the chief road of the Park."

"But that is only a nice little fortnight's walk, and with food at fifty cents a day, which would be all his expenses if he camped out, as I might parenthetically say, it would be very healthy for him to do, it would only cost two weeks' maintenance for health restoration and a better knowledge than he otherwise could gain from riding in one of these painted wagons—and your poor man would get it all for seven dollars."

Then she pouted out:

"Americans are soft-very soft-"

O'Rourke started; the words were the same that Ward had used.

"Yes," she exclaimed, "soft—very soft. They won't walk, they won't have an army because they are too lazy for an active military life; they live in overheated flats, take massage instead of exercise, pills instead of fresh air, and hot baths instead of cold water rub downs. They endure rheumatism rather than give up their meat, and biliousness rather than forego their rich foods. I wonder that I could have ever cared for any one who belongs to such a goose-like race. Much as I hate the Germans—they seem kings to me compared with these sleek-jowled American men and perfumed women, who are even sillier than that poor soldier last night whom you accept as a soldier just because he can shoot at a wooden target."

She turned and clutched his arm. Then there came a fierceness in her voice that, during all the years he had known

her, he had never before heard in her utterance.

"Listen, O'Rourke—this war is maddening me—for I love my country. I as a French woman—love my France—the land that has founded the world's civilization of to-day. I love my native soil—much more than any American woman could ever love this soulless land. . . And why? Why can't your women love their country as I love mine? Because—you men have not the courage to inspire your women with even a love for your own selfish selves. Then, how can they love their native land when the men themselves let their backbones get as soft as the body of a worm?"

She recommenced after a pausc.

"They do not love you, I say-," and her voice was high.

"They do not love you—or why should there be all these divorces—a divorce for every happy marriage. Like a hurtled ten pin, it knocks down all the others as soon as it is set up. What's the use of being happily married when one can be as happily divorced? No, there can be no patriotism in a land where the family is not secure and fixed in the purpose of its affection."

"Yes," she ran on, "your marriages are mere contracts of trade—easily broken by your Fury of divorce, that robbed me of my happiness, commenced in our little Parisian apartment, where I pictured the triumph of our future as I vocal-

ized and ironed your shirts."

O'Rourke bit his lip.

She recovered herself and then continued, but still with

vehemence in every word:

"And do you know that the whole world is hating youyou the boastful race—the self-loving people, who think of nothing but the enjoyment of all the riches of which you may despoil your land and outwit each other. . . . You are like a fat vulture feasting in the safety of his eerie crag, while watching the wolves devour the sheep in the fold below—and with bleary eyes in his satiety waiting, . . . until the enclosure is a shamble and the wolves gone, so that he may descend in safety and glut himself on what is left of the slaughter, . . . what even is left by the wolves. Yes," and she shot him a glance of fury, "yes, America, the land of the Big, because it has not done its duty to the world, is responsible for the carnage of Europe's wild war. . . . Had there been courage among you men here-had you organized as you should—as was your duty in a time of peace—or would you even organize now-to you eventually as a part of humanity would have come the proud victory of having maintained peace and justice among the races of mankind. . . . But-no. Your way is the way of darknessdown into the safety cellars down into the depths where your foolish fancy pictures security and comfort and ease; not up and onward to that broad meeting ground, where the other races of the world are now bravely struggling. . . . But some day you will come out of your moleblindness, but then it will be too late for you will come out into the sunshine of courage and truth perhaps only to be crushed.

O'Rourke stood aghast.

Her voice became softer.

"I know that it seems wrong for me thus to express myself,—especially to you whom I would not for the world offend. . . . But, O'Rourke—after that first visit of mine to this country—the injustice that America was doing toward the whole world—by not being brave enough to stand among the nations of the earth and assert the justice of God and man among them—taking sides as is its right, and fighting for truth, as is its duty—has so weighed upon me, that I dared not even think of this dreadful land, while I sang, for fear I should fail and falter in the very discouragement of the thought; for to me America spells nothing but the word weakness, . . . the letters are written large in your frailties and can only be effaced by iron and blood."

Her sincerity and the new tone of her voice, softened him and he looked at her. There was indulgence in his gaze as

from a father to a brawling child.

With the wonderful delicacy of her nature, in the silence which followed, she felt his forbearance.

Two tears slowly formed themselves and rolled down her

cheeks.

She did not seem to notice them; did not brush them away until slowly they lost themselves in the folds of her coat and splashed down over her hands.

Her beautiful face was now as impenetrable as the expres-

sion of the Sphinx.

Then again she spoke, her voice subdued:

"And it is right that you should ever remember that it was the mischief of your American institutions—which ruined my life, . . . tore me—through the folly of the fleshpot and the worship of gold—away forever from the man—whom I loved as no woman ever loved before."

She did not look at him but almost hissed:

"But whom I now hate—hate—as one of a despised race."

VII A GEOGRAPHICAL ILLUSION

Had it been anywhere else than in our glorious Park of the Yellowstone, O'Rourke, even with all his self mastery, would have had great difficulty in restraining himself at some of the pointed philippic of this genius, this marvelminded woman of the world of art, whose talent developed by the craft of patience, had made her name a part of every fireside conversation; who, now that she possessed great riches, in addition to the priceless possession of her developed talent, had thus embittered herself against the land of his birth; she, the gifted woman who had been his wife; she, the world-known artist, in whose making he had played as great a part as she herself—; no, never could he have found forgiveness for her defamation of his native land, save in that precinct of nature's fair worship; in that wonderland of God, where every step forward, every roll of the wheels brought forth a new inspiration to fly beyond the mere grovel and grind of human aggression.

And so they two traveled on—she with the fires of her fierce Latin emotion burning like the depths of the hidden lava, casting out in vaporing the slightest touch of that which sought to quench it; he, with the Anglo-Saxon forbearance, which like the canyon of the rushing river, deep riven and still deepening, remained in silence as the forces

of nature worked upon it.

His mind was becoming clearer now, as the machinery of her own argument and invective was turned upon his race—the race that he loved—the race of his father. . . . He was seeing things American, in a vivider light than he had ever before seen them; as it were, in the cold, clear light of an Arctic morning which cut away the mirage-painted coloring of the warm traditions of his native land.

Was there any truth in what she said? Was it possible that America had been selfish in every single survey that it made within or over and beyond its boundaries? Could there be any justification in her claim that America had actually neglected its opportunities to help advance the world? Yes—in one regard he felt that she was right. . . . America had lived too much to herself. . . . Polished shoes, manicured nails and other decrees of fancy fashions were all right in their way, . . . but did we have the stuff in us to march out with the rough boots and the heavy accoutrements of war and claw up our trenches of safety when the time should come?

Was she right in claiming that we would have to pay dearly for our long and almost unappreciated period of peace; that those bloody nations now in the death struggle would

look to us for an accounting as the trustees of all humanity in the possession of the most valuable part of the whole planet?

She was a woman deep in thought and brilliant in its expression. . . She interpreted what she saw as she interpreted her songs—from the glowing inspiration of her genius,

mellowed by the force of her purposeful reason.

Yes. It was well that fate had again thrown them together. He was at all events free from any renewal of a sentimental entanglement. . . . When he heard from Athena—and when would that be?—he would tell her all about it; tell her of what use she had been to him, in getting his bearings before launching "Old Glory."

It was with such thoughts as these the guide brought the

chauffeur up to Apollinaris Springs.

The name put an ironical curl on Prima's lips as she dis-

dainfully remarked:

"Have you Americans no originality whatsoever? Must you call everything you discover after something that exists in other lands? Why should any American town be named "Paris," "Rome," "Athens" or "Cairo"? The only really appropriate names you have are those that are of Indian origin—and even those are so distorted out of their original phonetics as to make them merely a puzzle to the speller."

"But then perhaps may it not be quite as well as having so many St. John's of this or St. James' of that?" O'Rourke

blandly suggested.

She laughed and then continued:

"Yes—but see what a mess you have got yourselves into. Instead of picking out some simple, easily spelled name which would be emblematic or descriptive of the place—your boastful generations have allowed a lot of real estate speculators to plant their names down on the map—until looking at a list of your towns is like looking at a city directory with 'ton' and 'ville' or 'burg' added to each name. If I were a member of Congress, the first thing I should do, would be to have a town-name revision committee formed, to rename half the towns and cities of the United States. Podunk is a beautiful sounding name compared with Brownsville or Evanston or Danville.

O'Rourke laughed.

"Now, why couldn't they call this pretty spring by a pleasant little name of its own, instead of 'Apollinaris,' for even

though its waters may to some taste like the European Apollinaris—it immediately loses any originality, and to me all charm in trying to be an imitator instead of an original? *Mon Dieu!*"

She looked again at the crystal clear spring and they

passed on.

"I wonder what your compatriots would say about me, if they knew how I was taking advantage of your good nature in abusing your Big America," murmured Prima, a light tone of contrition in her voice.

"Oh! I think that they would be rather tolerant, although I have never known anyone to dare speak of the United

States as do you."

"That's just it," said she warmly. "No one ever does because they do not like to offend and for fear that they may be misunderstood. Do you know from what I have learned of America, and I have perhaps learned much from the American colony in Paris, they are divided into just two classes?"

"Just two classes?"

"Yes. Positively divided into the two very distinct classes of 'Boosters'—as they call themselves, and 'Calamity Howlers,' as they call the other class. There are about ten thousand of these so-called 'Boosters' to one good martyr of a so-called 'Calamity Howler.'

O'Rourke smiled.

"I admit that it is almost a misdemeanor in this coun-

try to rant in criticism against it."

"That's just it. Even in cheap music halls girls in tights, indulgently denominated on the programs as 'Coryphées,' sing patriotic songs and enfold their scantily clad forms in American flags to win applause, but even at that," she reflected, "they tell me that when an Irish song goes on, there is heavy applause from a certain small minority. You people love the Irish, because they out-American the American in their hyphenated-Americanism."

"Oh, it's pretty much that way," remarked O'Rourke, "in all countries," hardly knowing what else to say, and wondering what it was in her last remark that had stung

so deeply.

She thought she understood and hastened to add:

"Ah, O'Rourke, don't think that I could say a word against that little gem-like Ireland and its courageous peo-

ple, who are 'the first to go out to battle and the first to fall.' I just merely said what I did to prove to you that there is always some strange call of the blood race—not the mere speech race—but the blood race—with its strong far reaching cry—that ever makes the blood course swifter, as the current of memory leads it back to the source of its origin. Hyphenated Americanism will endure for generations to come and Americans, and they are all hyphenated for that matter, ought to be wise enough to let it run its course; for it is like a mighty current which, although you can't dam it, you can none the less dike it out so that its flow will benefit rather than injure. You can't make a blood nation to order, any more than you can change the coast line of the whole sea."

She paused.

"And then you know after all that the only really safe national watchword is, "Ubi bene, ibi patria," for where one is well there is indeed the Fatherland."

"You wouldn't object to our insisting that everyone who enjoys the privileges of our wonderful land, should try to make even his instincts all American, and failing in that, that he should go back to that blood race of his origin where

he properly belongs?" interrogated O'Rourke.

"Oh, no, not at all; I suppose that you could even pass a law, expatriating back to the land of their origin, all those who in word or deed did not perfectly measure up to some arbitrary wordy standard of patriotic test. It would be, for you all sufficient Americans, about as easy in your original American way to denaturalize the Europeans as to naturalize them."

"We feel that if an American is not all American that he is not an American at all," said O'Rourke, rather wearily. "And what is this test of being an American?" she in-

"And what is this test of being an American?" she insisted. "Thus far it has been mere talk, has it not? A mere boosting allegiance to the Stars and Stripes."

"Oh," good naturedly returned O'Rourke, "I suppose that from your viewpoint our popularization of patri-

otic feeling is hard to understand."

"Not at all," she quickly returned. "I understand it, and I believe that it is dangerous, since it is offered as a mere substitute for those more substantial forms of patriotic test in continental Europe, where nearly every able bodied man has to give up part of his life to being a soldier."

She turned to him and slowly asked.

"Don't you think that as long as America hasn't any test to impose in the life-and-death way upon its citizens, that it would be best to modify its unique form of national conceit until the day when the test shall come."

"I presume that on account of our geographical advantage that we really are rather over-disposed to a degree of na-

tional apathy."

"Yes and your awakening will be very rude," declared "Listen to this, Mr. Self-Satisfied American, along another line of the same angle. . . . England in the present war is undergoing her great disillusionment—and the theory that geographical isolation was any advantage is an exploded theory. You Americans think that just because you are a few scant thousand miles away from the average center of the present world's war that you yourselves are protected by a patriotism such as was never before known; you congratulate yourselves that you are getting out of it when all the time, by your lack of any foreign policy whatsoever, you are getting deeper into it. . . You are like a man with a cancer—who will not have it treated because he will not believe the cancer is already gnawing at his vitals—and persists in taking some sweet tasting nostrum for boils, when he should lie down under the knife for the eradication of the real disease. . . . Now that it has been proved, that geographical isolation no longer means immunity from war, why don't you wake up to the fact that you are a people temporizing a peace which you will not long deserve nor long enjoy? Why don't you at all events have some actual foreign policy? Here you are taking millions of English and French money for murderous missiles—making extortionate profits from the manufacture of instruments of death with which our allies may fight the Central Empires. That is all very well from our standpoint, and I as a French woman approve heartily of it—except for the extortionate profits. But do not think that we, the allies, look upon such acts as any show of friendship? No. The whole world knows that you are all too selfish and too self-satisfied to form real friendships."

"You base that remark upon our declaration of the Mon-

roe Doctrine."

"Ha! Ha!— No— Why, don't you know that your much boasted Monroe Doctrine is really an English Doctrine—

formulated by English Diplomats for the protection of their American colony, and that taking advantage of your national conceit they let you bombast it out to the world—as though you really had something to back it up with. . . The Monroe Doctrine would never have been worth the paper it was written on had it not been for England's navy, which was at all times ready to support the Doctrine, not for your benefit, but for the protection of her own American colony, which is quite one of the most valuable shares of this continent."

She waited a moment and then asked:

"Are the Americans blind to have no foreign policy?"

"We have been pretty busy at home—we are still in the forest-clearing state of our National existence," answered O'Rourke.

"But within your own midst then? What have you done with one of the chief questions which confronts you, the racial question, I mean—adjusting your white race toward that of the Negroes. . . You fought a long four years' war, claiming to have fought it for the Negro, and then when it was ended, you simply forgot him and let him go his way—just as far as his way didn't hurt you. . . . What is your policy in regard to this race which politically you declare to be the equal of your own? Absolutely nothing—every little community decides each question as it comes up as it sees fit, and mostly decides it at the end of the rope. And then you demoralize yourselves, so that you even let a man be lynched, because he is a Jew, in one part of a country, and on the same day in another part of this same big country, elevate a Jew to one of your highest judicial offices."

She paused, but her eyes still flashed the fire of her con-

tempt.

"And what a pity. You think that you are living—but you really are a dead people. You are dead, and why? Because the only policy that you have is one of negation of truth and right. . . . Do you know what the only really palpable American policy is—, the one in which you most boast?"

O'Rourke looked up.

"I shall repeat it to you—repeat it for the shame of you as an American, and the shame of your whole race, the most foolish and unjust avowal of National tactics, a weak and vacillating soft nation has ever invented; a confession of incompetence before the bar of the whole world; a declaration of falsehood to all the other races of the earth; a plea that you will not abide by justice-by right or by any sort of reason-but only by our own self opinionated will-regardless of the rights of the weak and in defiance of the just compromise of the strong. Listen, I will give it to youthis, your only fixed American rule of conduct-I will give it to you-word for word-that each syllable may sink into your mind just as one day the words will deepen the spots of shame upon the cheeks of your Goddess of Liberty. Hear then the pronunciaments of this unjust doctrine, beside which a Mogul proclamation of rapine whines out like philanthropy. You know this policy—you all glorify in it, but some day it may be hissed back to you from the ashes and ruins of a wrecked and ruined America. Listen-hear me pronounce these grandiloquent words of your only American policy." She gathered herself up and spoke the words as though uttering a curse:

"Our Country! in her intercourse with other nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong."

She leaned back and then vehemently exclaimed:

"Ah, how different from the teaching of the whole Christian civilization. Right or wrong—my country! And who makes your country? Men—women—and yet you—when you have made your country wrong—you would imperil the lives of your defenseless babes—you would endanger the peace and happiness of the whole world to stand by that wrong. Oh, O'Rourke, don't you see the injustice?"

For a long time O'Rourke did not answer and then

finally said:

"How would you turn the phrase."

She rose up and stretched out her hands.

"Our country! in her intercourse with foreign nations must ever be right; right, ever right, our Country."

VIII A FREAK NATION

The Black Growler was roaring away with its usual unrestraint. Someone had rolled a tree trunk down over its mouth apparently in an effort to gag it; but the Black Growler down deep in its lair in the bowels of the earth, not at all noticing such a mere poking caress as a ten inch timber stuck down its long throat, kept on in an undisturbed, yet noisy outburst, the whole time that they visited the Lower Basin.

They were the first geysers that Prima had ever seen, and as they made their way over the plank walk, between the Whirligig, the Constant, the Minute Man and the other splashing pool geysers, O'Rourke, to whom geysers were an old story, both in Iceland and New Zealand, watched her curiously.

Her comment was long in coming, but finally she asked: "Do you see anything beautiful about this geyser bed?" "Well—the emerald pool has a wonderful depth of color."

"And so does the sky—only a thousand times more so. By the way, I was sorry that you missed that glorious reflection in Swan Lake yesterday. It held my attention all the way—but you never even looked at it—how fascinating it was. Quadrant Mountain and Bannock and Antler Peak, miles away, but by some mirage like effect of the high altitude, all reflecting in the single focus of that little lake their wonderful colors, . . . all borrowed from the sky, the wondrous every day sky of the whole world, which even gives these pools what little of loveliness they have."

"I am sorry that I missed the Swan Lake reflection,"

politely returned O'Rourke.

"I am glad that you flatter the commonplace that much," she came back.

"The commonplace—what do you mean?"

"Oh, I mean it from your American standpoint. It's along the same line of what I have before been telling you and I continue because I think that it will do you good. You have broken away—or even I might say—you have never acknowledged the artistic standards of Europe. You have never produced a first class tenor and barely one star of any sort in spite of the nearly one hundred millions that you number. There is not an American artist whose pictures or sculptures are really treasured; few of your authors are ever worth while translating even in Germany where printing is almost as cheap as typewriting; you have a whole section of Paris all to yourselves and inhabited quite exclusively by your compatriots with the educational advantages of that great capital before you, and yet have accomplished

during all these years almost nothing which will measure up to European classic standards of merit. . . . I must not forget to give your nation credit for what it has discovered in the field of practical science—you are as good now as the Chinese used to be along that line—and have mechanized your lives so that today in your electric lighted, automatic heated apartments, you feel sorry, when with white, waxy faces you look out into the wintry blast, for your forbears who were in the winter time obliged to go out in the open to get fuel for their fires."

O'Rourke held out his hand in protest but she canted on. "And this progress has been your undoing, for you substitute the casual discoveries of mechanics and electricity as a real advance along humanics. . . . But even with all your telephones and your music machines, I do not think that you live any better, or do as much for the world you live in, as did those nondescript but hardy adventurers—your forbears—who came over to seek their precarious fortune in America, because they were not well enough at home."

She dug her heel disdainfully down into the wet calcine

by the walk.

"When we were man and wife, O'Rourke, I never had the heart to tell you how your American ways and conceit bore upon me—for the debt of gratitude was too large to you to allow me any of even the smallest expression which might offend you. I shall always consider you the noblest of all men—contradictory as this statement may seem to you."

Her voice had lost its sarcasm and her disdain changed

to earnestness.

"All of the real joy I have had in life, none the less, has come from the inspiration of your own self-assertive self. I never then understood you, although I loved you. As it seems to me now I have only understood you these last few days while traveling in this, your native land."

She paused as though she feared that her personal refer-

ence would go too far.

"I merely thought you erratic, brilliantly so, in an individual way—but now I find that you were merely American, living and acting, just as the millions of other Americans, who all look alike, talk alike, dress alike, have the same smoothshaven faces, are barbered, manicured and laundered

as though they could not in their conceit be brought too closely together or resemble each other too much, drawing themselves up proudly in contrast over those less favored creatures of God's making, who are not Americans."

She smiled disdainfully.

"And now I am finding out what is the matter with America and what is the matter with Americans. It is a freak nation—not normal according to any of the more settled standards of all history—but dangerously—that is, for the rest of the world—dangerously abnormal."

O'Rourke stood aghast as she continued:

"Now you know what any civilized society does with an abnormal member—they generally lock him up even though he hasn't committed any crime and probably never will—but as a freak, society fears his insanity, even though it may not be very pronounced, and even though alienists themselves disagree in passing on his case, for when it is a question of insanity, society generally decides on its own normal side."

She looked him squarely in the face:

"What would you think if after this war was over in the regrouping of the European powers and Japan that a certain group should constitute themselves into a jury, to pass upon the question of America being sufficiently normal to take care of herself without being a menace to the rest of the world? Supposing that America should herself soon discover that she was suffering from a paresis due from overliving and too little exercise, and was powerless to object."

O'Rourke's face flushed with anger-but in a moment he

controlled himself while she countered:

"Then you are freakish because you are only a speech-family and not really a race—and you will, and can never be anything except a mere speech-nation, because of your negroes. So it is a mere language that holds you together—with a loosely organized government, which has already suffered one prolonged civil war. Even to this day your different sections have violent differences on finance and tariff not to mention internal improvements and the whole list of other political questions and sectional differences. Yes—O'Rourke—America is a freak nation."

O'Rourke's face was white as he spoke.

"We ease the burden of the whole world by our inventions which promote health and save life; we explore the depths

of Africa and discover the North Pole; we wage a war to free an enslaved people; we cleave the continent in twain; but all these things we do merely because we are abnormal, we are freakish! If that is racial insanity—I wish that the whole world were crazy.''

Prima's voice was conciliatory.

"I was hardly reasonable, I admit. I only spoke to drive the fact home, that you are not at all like the other peoples of the earth—that you are eccentric, and that each year your boasted melting pot, instead of normalizing your nation, makes it still more eccentric. Just reflect upon the sayings and doings of your leaders, compare them with those of Europe—tell me if they really are not eccentric in response to the demands of their eccentric constituencies?"

The Black Growler which had for a time been silent commenced to roar out again. To escape the shower from the

outburst they went around toward the road.

They stopped upon the edge of the hill where a break in the woods gave them a full view of the basin and the valley

with the steaming river vaporing through it.

"So this is what Americans spend good money to come and see—" she reflected, pointing toward the sputtering geysers as the fumes from the depths below rose up. "Why it must be almost as good to them as a lynching—to smell all these poisons, see all this churning mud and watch the hot water spouting. Freaks! Freaks! Ha! How you love them! What a joy they bring you."

She turned to him abruptly.

"Please show me no more of the freakishness. If there is anything beautiful to see in this Yellowstone Park, take me to it—but of its freaks I have had enough."

IX MORE TEST OF FORBEARANCE

Prima's delicate craving for beauty found its full satisfaction on the return road all the way from the Virginia Cascades, back to the Mammoth Hot Springs. The canyon and the great falls delighted her.

"But of course," she commented, "they have to exagger-

ate the beauty of the eolors; just listen to this description,"

and she read from a railroad guide:

"Walls of jasper, streets of gold, gates of pearl, foundation stones of emerald and sapphire and topaz and of amethyst, yes, they are all there. You see such a display of color as the eye of man never looked upon."

She laughed.

"How very American that all sounds! You see, the American rarely bothers about stating mere facts, or making accurately concise descriptions; he deals entirely in conclusions. So there you have it—the railroad booster, as a real American, merely connects up the hues of the rainbow with gold and pearl and precious stones and there is your conclusion beyond doubt whatsoever; the most beautiful thing in the whole world, and if you should mildly contradict, you would be thoroughly un-American; for of course everything in America must be either the biggest or the most beautiful, and if a thing is both big and beautiful, so much the better. I believe," she added dryly, "that one of your most popular passing songs is now a screech about a great big beautiful doll."

O'Rourke, apparently unmindful of what she was saying, stood out on a little jutting erag between the Falls and Inspiration Point, where the wild depth of the canyon lunged down, red and golden with sunshine, and the green ribbon of the river winked back at the blue of the sky.

"If these walls were of granite and not of this crumbling adobe stone—would it not add much to the sentimental

appraisal of it all?" she asked.

But he did not answer, again he felt himself rebelling against her continued bitter reflections and unjust comments. . . . Had a man talked as did she against all things American, he would have made an abrupt ending to his own role of listener. . . . But she a woman—and a woman who had been his wife—a genius of her womankind! He would be silent. . . . When all that she had been saying the last few days had at length crystallized itself in his brain, then alone would he know whether her vehement criticism was doing his Americanism good or ill.

She seemed to divine the reason for his unresponsiveness. "O'Rourke—" and there was always a little musical trill she put on the "r's" of his name that pleased him.

"O'Rourke, do you know that I am putting a severe test

upon you—the greatest test that human experience ever has to undergo—the test of long forbearance. . . . I talk to you as I would talk to no other one living. I don't mean in regard to what I have just been saying about this sacred playground of yours-but those other sharp words which have been a part of every phrase I have uttered. . . . But of all those in the whole world today—you are the only one to whom I can speak without restraint. Take what I say. therefore, as a mere expression of confidence-spoken perhaps idly—but with a possible purpose which may some time serve you. . . . If all that I say is chaff, then it is blown away as it is uttered—but if there is any of the solid grain, let it remain to be measured up in the store rooms of your mind, . . . for your good and through you the good of your compatriots."

They meandered around the great beautiful rambling width and length of the hotel. No further word came from her, . . . until looking out from the great lounge and ballrooms, she saw the ragged edge of the wood with a herd of

cattle browsing in the shade of the trees.

"Ah, this I love," she said. "How beautiful the primitive setting becomes this extravagant hotel. . . . Instead of fussing up the front view with parks and gardens, they have left it as it should be. They have held it as they have taken it from the hand of God."

They motored up Mt. Washburn. The day was clear and from the great height the whole beauty of the Park was spread out before them: the upper geyser basin with the play of its giant geysers, the yellowed outline of Hayden valley and the wondrous blue of the lake beyond; then the shaggy fringe of the forest broken by the canyon as it led the river on out toward the far distant plains below, . . . all schemed out in the light and shadow of the wide perspective.

She asked to linger long at Tower Falls and even when they had stayed up to the last moment of their schedule, looked lingeringly backward over the jumbled but majestic confusion of the canyon's sides, with the sentinel edges of the needles below, and the sheerness of the overhanging cliffs above.

Delight danced in her eyes.

"These distances are very long—from one point of interest to another—but there is vastness in it all that pleases me. But do you know," she added, looking at him amiably, "that in this Park you Americans have neglected a great opportunity?"

O'Rou ke looked at her inquiringly.

"For you do not tell us enough of what lays beyond these roads. If I were to make a choice of seeing what is on the road and what is off of it—I would, if time allowed, surely keep away from the roads, for in a place like this, there must be just as much of the wonderful in between, as there is on the roads themselves."

"I am glad that you give us credit for moderation in at least one regard-" acquiesced O'Rourke. "Do you know the first time I ever visited the Park, I fell in with an old chap as guide, who had been one of its first discoverers and who knew every section of the whole reservation. He had been a ranger with a couple of pals, and only once every year they would go down to Bozeman with their year's earnings. Then after they had bought their grub stake they would spend all the rest of their money as quickly as they could in any way whatsoever. When every cent was gone. with a happy heart as if freed of a great burden-they would go back for another long year's labor. . . . Wellpardon this apparent digression which I make merely to introduce you to my informant—this fellow told me almost what you yourself have divined, that the Park was more wonderful away from the roads than on it."

"Yes-and wonderful I am sure in not quite so freaky

a way."

O'Rourke smiled and she was sorry in a moment when she had said:

"Rest assured that the big and freaky things have already been first, as a matter of American impulse, all discovered."

X WHITE SLAVES

The usual reluctant farewell to the Yellowstone and again they were on their way.

She had asked that he show her Butte, and when they had come to the beetling butte, whose slopes were a jumble of

wooden shacks, smoking chimneys and treeless arid mountain stretches beyond, he saw that she shuddered.

"Yes, I know that it does look ugly," remarked O'Rourke apologetically. "Perhaps the ugliest city in the whole

world."

"Ugly?" Ugly?" and then she commented, "to me this ugliness is the symbol of strength. The knotted muscles—the bent back—the exhausting drip of the sweat—all these, when compared with the statuesque repose of ease and the buckling curls of an Adonis posing or a Venus in a perfumed bath, may not seem lovely—but they make up to me a picture of real beauty—beauty that shows always brightest in the harness of human toil—for strength is beauty and beauty is strength. Oh! I think that it is all wonderful."

"You notice," remarked O'Rourke, "that there are no trees or flowers or even grass or weeds; every living thing save man and his working beasts enveloped in the smelters, has been scourged away by the lash of their poisons."

"Splendid," she exclaimed. "Is not the thought inspiring. Here man alone survives the poisons that he himself produces; just he and the animals which he protects."

They drove around through the streets, their driver pointing out here and there the objects of interest as they

passed along.

"Two things impress me here," she said, "here in this, the most interesting city I have ever visited, . . . that although millions are being taken out of those barren slopes—there is no display of wealth; even the homes of the opulent are most modest in their dimensions, style and cost; and then I am impressed with the number of churches. . . . Do you know that we in Europe with our Catholic ideas, which, in spite of state freedom of worship, prevail in France—we perhaps believe too much that America is a Godless nation—and that is has gone backward rather than forward to find its precepts of religious comfort—either in the old philosophers of the Pagan ages—or shall I say it? Back to Mammon. . . You know that in America, La Chasse au dollar—the rush for the dollar—is considered to be your chief occupation."

"Of course," returned O'Rourke, "since religious tolerance is at the very basis of our institutions, in the scattering of our various church divisions, we may not make as much of a religious showing as European countries, which are still

more united in their sectarian worship than we—; but none the less, I believe that in actual God-fearing devotion we

compare favorably with any other nation."

"Do you know," she said thoughtfully, "that we in Europe have been inclined to believe that your churches were in the nature of clubs, where you hold regular meetings in more of a social than a religious way—that these clubs are presided over by men, rather more polite than religious— . . . who acted as masters of ceremonics—entertaining in sermons of a more practical philosophic than a religious trend and whose tenure of office depends much upon their social acceptability to the congregation; that these social-religious leaders, masters of ceremonies, report the affairs of their particular church unit to a central governing power—which reforms, revises or manufactures sometimes almost entirely anew, tenets to suit the convenience and promote the pleasure of their following, whom otherwise they would lose in part or all.

"The social part of church life is an essential part of its religious control," simply returned O'Rourke, who never

argued upon any question of religion.

"Well, I am glad that here in Butte, religion makes such a showing and that the churches constitute the best part of its buildings," concluded Prima.

They were driving at last, down a street toward the station—a weather beaten street, upon which still stood some of those old pioneer wooden buildings with false fronts squaring off the angles of their roofs to enhance the size of

their appearance.

A gleam of a silken robe and a brightly colored mantle caught Prima's quick eye, as the painted face of a woman followed them for a moment curiously and then disappeared behind a barricade of boards which shut off from view a large bricked courtway.

The abandon of the woman, the colors and flimsiness of her clothes, her painted face and darkened eyes, betrayed

to Prima her character in a glance.

"Let us visit the place—I want to know what these white American slaves of which I have been reading so much are like."

O'Rourke's face reddened and paled. . . . His whole de-

meanor was one of protest.

"Why should you want to prevent me?" she interposed.

"We visit hospitals and morgues. Why shouldn't we visit

this place?"

"Because all degrade themselves by even approaching these unclean creatures whose degradation is like a mud that won't wash off."

"Ah, that is your viewpoint. . . . You, like all other Americans think that you can, at the long end of a stick called law, keep these beings away from your own precious selves, or even legislate them out of existence. . . . Don't you know that these women represent one of the oldest diseases the world has ever known? A disease called Lust. Every disease has a cause, which if removed brings back health—now mere pronouncements of law won't cure this disease of lust; even though they seem to be driving the poison from one part of the body politic to another; such methods may sometimes make a cancer of a boil. The cause of this disease is in the institutions of society themselves. . . . Reform them and the disease will disappear."

She beckoned to a policeman who stood by the side of the

barricade.

"We wish to visit this place. I have an experiment which I would like to try." She slipped a yellow-backed bill into his hand and, all attention, he effusively offered his services. Policemen are everywhere the same in these soft days of petty reform.

With a red face O'Rourke sheepishly followed, fearing for

her safety.

They went through the barricade as through a turn-stile, the boarding making up three separate screens which overlapped, to separate as it were, the clean from the unclean.... It was late afternoon and the effulgent sun scattered its rays down over the red pavement, on the labyrinth of which the one-storied separate apartments appeared like cells in the prison of that strange surrounding, which only needed bars at the windows to make it a Yoshiwara of Japan.

Scattered along at their doorways, visiting one another or strolling about the court, were the creatures. . . . who like broken blood vessels upon the face of humanity make it blush with shame for all time. . . . Neither the vivid paint on their faces nor the elaborate hair dress could bring any imitation or semblance of beauty to those faces, whose lust and degradation had despoiled them of the last trace of woman's comeliness. They were all old—not

in years—but old in the shame which in a day ages even the budding, first freshness of youth. . . . There was to Prima and to O'Rourke no picturesqueness in the long perspective of the courtway, although the glow of the yellow sun painted new colors into the dull red of the brick—and glinted the bright colored gowns of the inmates.

Prima gathered close to O'Rourke and shuddered. . . .

Her face was white and her breath came short. She was suffocating in an attempt not to breathe the air of the women about her.

Then she cautiously advanced as if to approach and yet

hold herself safe from a nest of serpents.

A group of the women gave up their lewd gossip and looked at her curiously, as still holding to O'Rourke, she approached with her eyes fixed upon them.

Her voice came to them low—though so clear that not a word was lost to even the drug-dulled ears of the bawds.

"Are there any of you who would leave this life which is destroying your bodies and damning your souls?" she asked.

On some of the faces there was a leer of interest—on others a mere half blank expression of coarse amusement. "Ha! Ha!" thought these last, "some great society woman who has come here to get her pictures in the papers as an angel of mercy."

She advanced a step nearer. . . . Now she spoke as across a chasm to those she would save. Her simple entreaty came

like an assuring comfort from the Scripture.

"I will show you the way—the way of happiness. I will care for and protect you—not one, but all, if you will only come. . . . See—money is naught. It will be yours for your uplift, not your defilement; for your welfare, not your degradation."

She turned to O'Rourke. "Please give to each one of these, and then tell them that if they will only put on some decent clothes and meet us at the train—that I will

lead them up out of this awful life."

She weakly swung upon him as he took the money crowded into his hand and passed over to each of the jades one of the

crisp yellow-backed notes.

They reached out for them greedily and there was a snarl as one thrust her hand out farther than the others. . . . Fingers which trembled and wavered like the smoke ascend-

ing from the cigarettes held in their nervous clutch, greedily crumpled the bills out of sight and looked askance lest someone might reclaim them.

Prima put out her hand gropingly and then tried to ex-

plain.

"That money is just to pay for your cab fare and as an earnest that I will take care of you—if you—will come—come this very moment—follow me out from this—this—hell. . . . There is still an hour before the train leaves for the coast. Come and I will lead you all into a new life. . . . Come, please come! Decide now—and leave at once—that is the only way to break away from this life of evil. Come! Please come!"

Never was an appeal of simple words more eloquently or beautifully uttered. . . . That voice which in the melody of song had brought fame and fortune in a whole nation's effusive praise and the great world's unstinted applause, . . . although it had thrilled thousands to ecstacy and moved multitudes to tears, had never before carried more of the heart and soul of Christ's own message, than in those few words breathed like a breath of restoring fragrance upon the painted faces and scarred souls standing before her in their pit of fetid vice.

O'Rourke looked. . . .

She clung limply to him and as he gazed there seemed to come a radiance in her look that painted a halo about the calm white face, even more beautiful in that moment of woman's contrast; . . . and suddenly to him she became the image of the Madonna. Reverently and in silence he led her away.

Quickly they left; even the ragged street took on something of the beautiful by comparison with the court of iniquity which in their memory remained like a bleared blotch of recollection in woman's dishonor.

Prima was long in recovering herself—breathing deeply as if she had been strangled.

When she was fully herself she looked at O'Rourke inquiringly, long and earnestly.

He divined her inquiry and answered:

"No, they will not come."

And she moved her head sadly. . . . In her look he knew that she too was convinced that not even one would come—

that to redeem those scarlet women of the painted faces under the present condition of society the most fervent prayers to God's own shrine seemed unavailing.

XI THE ASIATIC FRONTIER

They had journeyed across another state and were still a

long night's ride from the Pacific Coast.

It was a glorious city of the mountain plains to whose stream of wealth flowing from the wheat lands of the Palouse and Big Bend was added the deep gathered treasures of Coeur d'Alene.

They were in the Chinese room of the great Hotel. The orchestra was playing "In Dreamy Chinatown," and the waiters, except for "Number one," who was Chinese, were

all Japanese.

"Do you know where we are?" asked Prima.

O'Rourke wondered at the query.

"We are on the frontier of Asia," said she reflectively. "We are not even yet to the Pacific—but still we are figuratively on the Frontier of Asia."

"Frontier of Asia?" repeated O'Rourke. "It does seem something like it, doesn't it, with these oriental surroundings,

these Asiatic servants."

"Oh, it isn't particularly on that account," commented Prima. "Their presence here though is just one of the smaller proofs that mountains, rivers and seas—yes, even the ocean itself docs not now-a-days make a frontier."

"What makes a frontier then?"

"The boundary of a nation is at any point of the whole earth where it has the strength and power to get and to remain."

"Then evidently this isn't the Asiatic frontier," laughed

O'Rourke.

"And I hope that it actually never will be," quickly returned Prima. "But do you Americans really realize that every day, modern inventions, your own inventions, are bringing the shores of the Yellow man nearer and nearer to your own; do you realize that with the tremendous pressure

of their population that they must indeed one day crowd down upon you, as sure as water seeks its level and rain falls to the earth? Don't you realize that the oceans of today, instead of being an obstacle, are really an advantage to invasion, in that they afford an evener and surer unobstructed pathway than the land itself?"

"Yes—what you say is true and we should not be lacking in leaders to call the people to a sense of the danger, not only from that source but from any other invasion whatso-

ever."

She paused a long time and then measured out her words as a cord passing through her hand, feeling for an effect—waiting to see when the cord would show that it had reached the bottom by slackening. "You have wondered at my wild rhapsody against the United States, against your country.... I wonder if you will ever forgive me for what I have uttered. It all seemed very unseemly—did it not?"

O'Rourke nodded his head.

"Well, I had a purpose in slandering your country—a great purpose... Many of the things I said, I did not myself believe—but I said them with a purpose—honest purpose—and that purpose is my justification."

O'Rourke's look was of wonderment.

"Yes. It may have been a deception, but it was justified. I wanted to awaken you—that you might the better serve the land you love and thus help the great cause of humanity. You do not understand me?"

A movement of the head was his negation.

"Well, I shall explain and as briefly as possible.... Since I have come into the possession of riches my constant cry has been: 'How can I best use this money to benefit the world?' and every time this answer to my cry has come....'

She paused and looked long at him.

"By making some brave champion the implement of good doing—by making some brave, strong champion serve humanity and his country as few men have ever served it before."

O'Rourke gave a start of amazement.

"You are that 'brave, strong champion,'" she suddenly declared, and then went on. "I am going to publish a paper—its name shall be 'Humanity.' My whole fortune, if necessary, shall be spent in its success and you—you, O'Rourke, must be the soul behind my fortune."

"You mean that I should manage the newspaper—that I should edit it?"

"Exactly."

"But much as I would love to serve you—much as I would love to serve all humanity in the manner which you propose, I cannot—I—I cannot "

She held up her hand and then arose there in the seclusion of their retired corner. Leaning forward that he might the

better hear she protested:

"You shall not say no—you shall not now give me your answer; but I am sure that eventually you will not deny the

world the use of your brilliant leadership."

His mind at first was a blank—a dead blank like the brain before it has gone out in the vagary of a dream. Then the thoughts came pounding their interrogations. . . What could it all mean? How did it happen that she had by some strange coincidence fallen upon the same plan for the use of her great wealth as had Ward? . . . Ah. Did she know anything about Ward's plan? He looked at her steadfastly to see if perchance there might not be some indication in her voice and manner to prove to him that it was a hoax.

She was still standing, her graceful form leaning slightly forward, the lips parted, the eyes calm and resolute and an expression of intense earnestness glowing from her beau-

tiful face.

"O'Rourke, I am beginning to love this country—love it because it has a great part to play in the service of all mankind. . . . Do you think that a land such as this—the fairest and the richest part of our whole planet is just for one nation's individual use—do you think that God has reserved this vast treasure ground for just one nation—just one people? No—the nation that holds this fair country must be ever a nation that labors in behalf of the whole world. . . . Its people must be crusaders striving to win back the holy sepulchres of mankind from the profane desecration of empty nationalism. No, O'Rourke, the citizenry of America must be more than any people we have heretofore known in the history of the world. They must be humanists first—and Americans afterward. The cause of the whole world is theirs. . . . They must win all humanity to a new sense of justice through the nobility of their own example."

His blood coursed more quickly to the sound of her eloquence, the sweet clear toned voice rising and falling silvery

and clearly attuned, and yet so low that none other beyond him could have phrased out the words.

She sank down in her seat and buried her face in her hands; tears were in her eyes and wet on her cheeks when

she again looked up.

"You remember, Tim, how in the old days we often spoke of the seriousness of life—and how each hour was another step nearer the end of the journey. . . . We are both farther on—oh, so much further, now than then. You sacrificed everything for me. It was you who stitched one leaf after another into the book of my life until finally came the one gilded with fame. Everything that I have done has been with the sole thought of doing for you what you have done for me. Now my work is ended, the blood and carnage of war have taken from me the soul to sing—hereafter I want to work along merely as your servitor—your aid, if you will allow, and this great primal success which shall come to you, shall be sweeter to me than was the day of my own fullest triumph. . . . The sun is still before us on the long journey—do not hesitate—but promise that you will measure the days off with me in this great service."

He raised his hand in protest.

"I will not take no for an answer," she hastily declared. "You may think it over—and then when you have reflected I know that you will not deny me."

* * * * * * *

The following few days were cut deep in the memory of both. Spokane with its beautiful lengths of spotless streets and its waterfalls bringing the freshness of the mountains and the treasure of the forest, down into the busiest center of its metropolitan structures; Seattle with its snow crowned, forest girdled frame, a dream like picture, painted with the reflecting colors of rainbow lakes and the lambent beauty of fair Puget Sound; then Tacoma, that bright-eyed daughter of the sea, in coy retirement by the forest, with nature showering into her lap its richest treasures; then Portland, the proud Queen of the Columbia, where even the clouding smoke of giant forest fires cannot smother the fragrance of its roses, nor dim the gleaming beauty of its wondrous river.

Ah, that splendid Empire of the Great Northwest. . . .

How big and strong had been its growth, how perfect the

fulness of its young life.

To them it was like looking upon a warrior just returned victorious from battle, with the garlands of peace covering wounds that had bled; . . . for those fair cities in the midst of their mountains, forests and rivers; their crystal lakes and flowered shores stood as an emblem of man's progress, which had through the weary years of bygone forbears, been bruised and broken in travail and toil.

And O'Rourke, how it thrilled his heart and quickened his pulse, the thought of the opportunity that lay before him—not that offered him by Prima, for—he had already given himself over mind and body to the task of Ward's OLD GLORY—but that opportunity that he felt lay within himself in the very exultance of his newly awakened Ameri-

canism.

The colossal strength of America should be for the world—for humanity. . . . Even though he should be by fate, but one of the smaller instruments in its advancement, none the less it should be.

"My country must be right. Right, ever right, my country."

XII THE CITY OF THE GOOD HERB

They were going down to San Francisco by boat; they passed Astoria, that quaintest of all fishing and lumbering towns, built up on stilts snatched out of the virgin forest which still clusters about it, and with a farewell look at the majestic Columbia winding into the bay, they took an ocean greyhound, that leaped off down the coasts of the treasure lands beyond, and with the glory of an evening sun painting their way through the Golden Gate, came to the mansion-crowned hills and the mart capped vales of another wonder city of the West.

Prima was exultant.

"Just one city like this is enough to make anyone proud of being an American," she exclaimed.

O'Rourke smiled and wondered if he had not been

dreaming all the terrible words she had but a few days before

been uttering against America.

"It has been a long time since I have come to this wonder city," he said. "I really have made this the end of my journey. It was here that I ordered my mail forwarded. They will be the first letters that I have received since I left Europe. I am glad that we both succeeded in getting hotel reservations. . . . Everything's crowded."

A deep look suddenly filled Prima's eyes—but she merely

smiled and said nothing.

They were to be at separate hotels, she in the great marble lined granite pile on the hill of fashion, where the gilded banquet halls and mirrored ballrooms made the place more like a wing of Versailles Palace than an American hostelry; he in the more commercial hotel, where fashion compromised with trade, . . . down in the midst of the city.

"Let me take you first to your hotel," she suddenly sug-

gested.

She alighted when they had come to it and sweetly remarked:

"Now please do drive on with the servants and the baggage and when they have got things installed, come back here to look for me—I will be in the ladies' room, wherever that may be."

He hesitated. . . . The request was so unusual.

"Please do go on," she insisted. "I want to have my first impression of this wonderful city all to myself, and this hotel is as good a place as any—right down here in the midst of everything."

Only for a moment did he wonder at the strange request. Then reflecting upon her privilege as a genius in idiosyncratic indulgence, he lifted his hat. . . . In a moment the car had driven him along.

Barely was the taxi around the corner, than in a breathless

haste she entered the hotel.

"Where do you get the mail? Where is the post office?" she asked of the first employee she came to.

He showed her the direction and she quickly found the way.

The clerk came forward. . . .

"Please pass me the mail for Mr. Timothy O'Rourke. I asked to have some mail forwarded in his care here," she explained, "and since I am now waiting for him—perhaps

I can employ the time by picking out my own letters. . . . We are relatives, you know," and she shot one of her winsomest and sweetest smiles upon the clerk whose calloused nature none the less quickly responded in adoration of this queen of women.

He hesitated—looked at her again and then with a bow—a very unusual formality with him—excused himself, returning in a moment with a large packet of letters.

She gathered it up and with another sweet smile,

had taken them away before he could, perchance, protest.

She dropped into a seat and ran the letters over in her fingers until with a sudden start she found one—registered and foreign post marked—which made her hand tremble. . . . It was of strong but very fine paper. She ran the gummed back quickly over her lips then after waiting a moment for the glue to moisten, with a hat-pin she deftly lifted the flap away.

With a sigh of relief at the success of the attempt she

pulled out the contents. . . .

There was a message of a single page. . . . With a white face she read and then looked long and hatefully, at a little strip of braid which had fallen from the letter. . . .

Then a frenzy of resolution urged her to her purpose. With the hat-pin she cut away one-half of the double

sheet. What can't a woman do with a hat pin?

The part with the message was crumbled up in her hand. . . . Upon the other part she printed with pencil, the single word "Disillusioned," and then carefully replaced it in the envelop brushing over the gum from a blank envelop which she took from her bag and thus again sealing it together, so that it was, except what had been taken from it, as it was before. . . .

She was quivering with excitement—but now that the work had been done, a single moment sufficed to restore her. . . . She did not look for any more letters in the same handwriting for the message itself told her that this was unnecessary.

When she had fully regained her composure, she went back

to the postal clerk.

Her eyes were dancing with merriment which she alone

knew was feigned.

"Ah, how foolish I was. . . . Do you know that I had entirely forgotten that all my mail is to be forwarded to Los Angeles. Ha! Ha! Please say nothing about it. . . .

The clerk laughed back—for who wouldn't laugh with such a beautiful woman? . . . and he did not for a moment reflect that he had been very imprudent in giving out mail, to even one as prepossessingly charming as she.

Her heart beat wildly while she sat down and waited for

O'Rourke's return.

The crumpled paper and the tiny bit of silk braid seemed to burn into her bosom where she had thrust them.

O'Rourke came.

"I am very anxious to know what mail there may be for me-will you please wait for me a moment that I may go

and see?" He turned to go.

She reflected quickly. The clerk in spite of the warning might say something. The episode would be still too fresh in his memory. . . . It would be better later. . . . Clerks in crowded hotels forget-and then later, perhaps the clerk would go off duty.

She called O'Rourke back.

"I know that I am selfish. But I am faint. . . . What good will your letters do you if I do not give you time to read them. Please take me to my hotel and then you can get them afterward.

He acquiesced.

The car spun up the hill with its two passengers, one with a light heart, thinking hopefully of what good news might be awaiting him in the long looked for mail; the other heavy hearted, her pulse athrob with jealousy and hate—and yet torn with remorse.

Ah, O'Rourke, what sadness awaits you. . . . And Prima, what remorse shall be yours. . . .

XIII DISILLUSIONED

O'Rourke hastened back to the hotel as soon as he could

get away from Prima.

With a light step he hurried up for his mail. It was handed to him by an assignment clerk as O'Rourke entered his name in the registry book. Fate had indeed favored Prima in her wicked work.

As he stood at the desk he hurriedly ran the letters over until he came to IT. Lovingly, he took the letter in his two hands after he had crowded the other mere missives in his pockets. . . . He went into the secluded reception room beyond the marble lobby. He wanted to be alone.

Then he opened it up.

A puzzled look overspread his face—which suddenly went

white, then gray as he pulled out that single sheet.

Then the word—that long, pencil printed word danced before his eyes—and he heard the music playing on beyond take it up as a mad, mocking, jangling chorus. "Disillusioned. Disillusioned."

Then his mind became numb. He clasped his hands together and curiously reflected that they felt like putty. He drew up weakly in his chair and tried to think. A Chinese porter in blue gown came by arranging the chairs and tidying the velvet rugs; he wandered at the calmness of his face.

Oh! How contented he was, that Chinese; what a wonderful thing it must be to go about in a blue gown with no other thought than to arrange chairs and tidy the floor, and all in such a contented and peaceful manner. . . .

He put his hand up to his forehead. It was cold and wet and yet it seemed as though a hot iron was held against it.

He struggled up and then staggered down the corridor. People looked at him significantly—but he did not notice them. . . . At the door of the bar he was bumped into by a couple of hilarious fellows whose profuse apologies carried to him much of the aroma of the wine they had been drinking; he envied them the temperament that could enjoy and forget in such an absurd condition as wine bibbing.

He wandered out into the street. The fresh air somewhat

revived him. He walked straighter now.

The grating of the brakes of a tram-car stopped directly before him and made him look up. He did not notice the sign of its destination—he did not care—he only wanted to keep going somewhere that the life warmth might again come back to his tired nerves; so he got on.

The car rattled along up and down the glistening lines of the hilly street with its terraced houses of wood and tiers of

steep high steps.

Finally they came to a turning where on one side there were darkness and silence, but brilliant lights and music on the other. Everyone in the car got off—got off and went

hurrying down to where the lights shone and the music

played.

O'Rourke hesitated and then turned away from the lights, . . . down toward the gloom, where the ebon blackness of the water alone reflected the light of the stars.

His footsteps struck dull and hollow against the stone pavement and his form was stooped as he went forward. . . . down toward the gloom and the black water, fit companions of his despondency.

XIV REMORSE BRINGS REPENTANCE

Prima in her bed chamber with its gilded ceiling and upon her silk draped couch, did not once close her eyes during the whole of that dreadful night. From time to time she got up and going to one of the huge windows looked out upon a brown stone pile, which was still as stately as the day that it became the pride of Nob Hill.

It was an "old fashioned" place but yet so stately as to be always "new fashioned." Its architecture and setting pleased Prima—and she pictured herself as its happy mistress, with O'Rourke-whom she was sure she had always loved, coming up its steps with measured tread to meet her with one of those greeting kisses of years ago, but which still, with the memory, thrilled upon her lips.

She wondered how he had taken his disappointmentwondered if her single handed conspiracy against him had succeeded. . . . Where was he now? And when would she again see him ? Ah, the weariness of the hours of night.

She restrained herself until one of the last early hours of the morning. Ah! She could stand it no longer; she would call up the hotel and merely ask if he was there—that she might know that he was safe.

She called.

The sleepy voice of the operators sounded harshly in her ears.

"Mr. Timothy O'Rourke. Please do not disturb him if he is asleep. A party merely wishes to know if he is there__'

There was a long wait—several times the sharp snap of other connections jarred upon her wrought up nerves.

"Yes. He is here—that is—his rooms have been engaged

by him and his baggage placed in them."

Her lips silently formed the thought of her hope. Ah, yes. He was undoubtedly in his room—asleep.

No, she would not disturb him. "Thank you; so sorry to have bothered you."

And she went back to her bed.

Dawn came and found her again looking out of the window, as the burst of the sun struck up out of the great Pacific; and from the Golden Gate, out over the western lands a new day was heralded to the world that lay beyond, the world just awakening from the darkness of its night.

She threw open the casements and looked down over the steep streets walled up with many storied buildings—with here and there a naked foundation still speaking of the ruin

of the quake and the destruction of fire.

The air was fresh with the heavy ocean breath that bore up from the tropic shores of the South, tempered by the currents that clave the waters from the far distant domain of Asia's shores.

She breathed deeply and waited, her anxious eyes upon the clock—until that precious moment would arrive when she might conventionally again call.

At last the hands pointed the hour. Eagerly she went to the telephone. There was a wait of an eternity.

"Yes—Mr. O'Rourke—I would like to speak to him—Yes—Please—I would like to speak to him—to Mr. O'Rourke."

There was another interminable wait; a confusion of voices came and then finally a voice—settled and matter of fact.

"The chambermaid says that Mr. O'Rourke has not occupied his room; that Mr. O'Rourke is not there; that his room has not been occupied."

"Please," she pleaded, "there must be some mistake. Oh!

Please see again."

Another wait even longer than the others.

She could hear someone preparing to speak at the instrument. Ah. Perhaps it was he. . . .

She held her breath.

It was the same business voice of the hotel employee, rather quicker and more matter of fact now.

"No, he is not in. Even his baggage has not as yet been

opened."

The telephone receiver dropped from her hand and swayed back and forth like a pendulum counting the moments of her dispair.

She staggered across the room, and fell upon the bed.

"O! what have I done—what have I done?" she moaned bitterly. . . . And she pictured to herself O'Rourke—the brave and the strong—her champion—becoming as a little child in the sudden weakness of disappointed love.

XV WHAT THE DRUG DID

Prima was too weak and nervous to know what to do. . . . She felt desperate in her remorse. O! the folly of her wickedness. O! how quickly she must act to find O'Rourke if ah, she dared not think of it in her terror she called for the house physician.

He came more Beau Brummel than professional in appearance with that tailored air of prosperity which seems to set doubtfully upon the backs of some American profes-

sional men.

"I must have something to quiet my nerves."

He understood—and writing a prescription gave it to her. Her maid came at her ring and telephoned for the drug.

"How does it say that it should be taken?" asked Prima.

"One dose every four hours."

Almost greedily she gulped a dose down.

"Ah, now I shall feel better."

She lay down on the bed—her head so racking with pain that her mind became a blank. To her hours—days seemed to drag slowly along, wear dully away.

She got up and looked dizzily out of the window.

"What should she do? Where should she commence?"

She felt no better—the drug had done her no good. . . . Perhaps it was because she had not taken enough.

She saw the parcel containing the prescription before her. Hastily she gulped down another dose—with no thought of the time-no thought that she had taken two doses within

the quarter hour.

Then she lay down on the bed; her senses became languid. . . . Finally a smile came to her lips, as the drug gripped into her nerves.

She folded her hands and fell asleep.

XVI THE SEARCH

When she awoke—the doctor with her companion and her

maid were standing by her bedside.

"Lucky that I made those doses rather weak," smiled the doctor, "had they been even a little heavier, there might have been a more serious story to tell. How did it happen that you took the two at once?"

Prima hardly looked at him and he felt himself dismissed

by her glance.

"Give her this," whispered the doctor to the maid as he left.

"What time is it?" asked Prima, weakly.

"Half past four."

"And in the afternoon?" she asked bewilderly.

The maid nodded.

"Ah—get my bath ready—see—quickly—I must be going. Call at the phone and ask for Mr. O'Rourke at his hotel. Tell him that I am coming—that I have something most important to tell him—Oh! quickly, ask and if he is not there find out where he has gone."

The maid went to the phone while Prima hurried into the

bath.

"What do they say?" she called impatiently.

"That he has gone."

Prima came running out—dripping with water and covered only in the towels which she had snatched over her.

"What-gone! No, not gone-," and then to herself she

repeated softly. "No-not gone."

The maid helped her dress and Prima's mind became clearer after she had drank some of the black coffee which had been sent up to her. Yes, O'Rourke had left. But! she was sure that she would soon find him. Yes—find him—the man to whom she would

give her last heart beat.

She herself would go in his search—it was too terrible to wait to find out what others might try to do—he was an easy man to find—he—her O'Rourke, with his resolute step; the clear eyes and his soldiery bearing.

She ordered a car and started out, first to his hotel.

She knew the number of his suite and went up directly to it.

A chambermaid was sweeping down the hallway.

"Have you seen the gentleman who has this suite?"
The maid was loquacious—not a rare quality among hotel

The maid was loquacious—not a rare quality among hotel maids.

"Shure an' the gintlemin that had thim rooms niver had thim at all, M'om. The baggage comes in wan day an' goes out the other—with no soight of a human bein' wid 'em,' and she held up her hands in protest against such ghost-like conduct.

Prima made her way down to the clerk's office.

"What forwarding address did Mr. O'Rourke leave, please?" and she was glad at the thought that the postal clerk of the day before had nothing to do evidently with that part of the hotel office.

The clerk went over his books, consulted with a fellow-

clerk—then the cashier and returning, said:

"Mr. O'Rourke only came here yesterday for his mail—and then this morning quite early someone came with a note from him—paid his bill and cheeked out with his baggage."

"Who was it, do you know?"

A wait and then another clerk came forward.

"I don't remember—I only satisfied myself that he had a right to take the baggage away. I hope that there is no harm done."

"Oh, not at all," responded Prima weakly. "I merely wanted to get his address. Surely he must have left some forwarding address for his mail?"

The clerk again went to make a search.

He came back with a telegram.

"This is the telegram of reservation from the Portland if you call up that hotel by long distance it might just be that he has made other reservations on a California itinerary—if he had one—from that same place, and perhaps they can tell you." "O, yes—certainly, he must have had an itinerary," exclaimed Prima—as the hope dawned on her and she remembered O'Rourke's mentioning that he did not intend to remain long in San Francisco.

She would not recognize what a far chance it was.

She herself went to the long distance.

A delay and then a voice came to the phone.

It was the Portland Hotel talking.

Yes—they remembered Mr. O'Rourke—the noted author. When he paid his bill he mentioned something about going to Los Angeles and San Diego—at least that was what they remembered—at all events—everybody seemed to be going that way. That was all the information they could give.

But again hope shone in Prima's eyes.

Yes, he would have gone to Los Angeles or San Diego.

And on the next train Prima herself was hastening thither.

XVII PAIN IN A PRISON OF PLEASURE

The tide breasting in from the Golden Gate, now mantled in the night, lapped its ripples up against the shore, and O'Rourke stood and listened. . . .

Suddenly in the sky above, the roaring buzz of a motor was heard, and looking upward he saw an aeroplane's lights, as it somersaulted about leaving in its train a trail of pyrotechnic sparks.

It diverted his mind and suddenly he became conscious that the lights and the music and the confusion just beyond, came from the precincts built up in a glory of architecture, amid a wonder of nature's own gem-like setting to commemorate the greatest peace achievement of all mankind.

Great lights shot out with a gun-like swiftness from giant reflectors just before him and played upon the lofty arches, the turret crowned towers and the ensculptured columns of man's newest and most beautiful effort in the domain of art.

He stood and looked as the light, half curtained by the

gloom, beckoned him toward it—one lustrous tower radiant with jewels, rising beyond and above him, with its inspiration of beauty and strength.

He clasped his hands behind him and gazed steadfastly; then turning from the gloom walked toward where that attainment of man's own art dreamt out its fair vision of a more wondrous future in the fullness of its present accomplishment.

Yes—to him it meant life—purpose—new resolution in a service toward that humanity which here was gathered from even the warring corners of the earth, to do homage to the goodness of God and his blessings on men.

Within those calm and placid precincts of beauty he would find his solace and from those gardens of fragrant flowers groves of citrus and avenues of palms, he would gather the balm to assuage his grief.

He had come fully to himself by the time he had joined the throngs—and sweetly the music floated to him in the fragrant air of the perfect night.

Hour after hour he wandered about, communing with the lovely and the fair of those mute emblems of man's progress along the highway of delight.

Then the throngs became fewer—and finally the sound of his own footfall echoed alone in the silence.

He found himself standing in a strip of sweet scented garden. Before him gleamed the lights of a building which alone was gathering in the stragglers.

He entered. It looked strangely like a hotel to him, with its wide lounging corridor about which in easy wicker chairs, visitors were still seated here and there.

He asked of one of the attendants-

"A hotel? Certainly and most excellent accommodation the best in the city and all right in the grounds. Yes some accommodation still open," was the voluble answer.

And in a few moments—O'Rourke had made himself a prisoner—a prisoner of pain in precincts of beauty.

XVIII THE AWAKENING

Then one day, O'Rourke in his prison of pain in the walls of beauty awoke from the dulling numbness of his disappointment to the full bitterness that he was a man broken and useless for the great purpose of his life—and that it should not be he who should lead on in the far crusade for the weal of all humanity.

The weal of all humanity! Again and again the words echoed back to him from somewhere. His lips curled disdainfully. The weal of all humanity! Ha! Ha! What a foolish phrase. What did it really mean? Nothing but a soap bubble blown in the face of eternity. Ha! Ha! The weal of all humanity. He seeking it—Ward seeking it—two men—a group—an army—an army, yes, a nation—what did they amount to in the immutable shuttling of the forces of nature in the womb of mortality. . . .

Again he laughed—he whose whole life had been of the intensest optimism—now suddenly found the phrase revolving about like a hurdy-gurdy in his tired brain until every bright color of his faith in humanity turned a lifeless grey—symbolic of his misanthropy.

His thoughts became clammy in the revulsion of his feelings, and the cold sluggishness of his mind wormed down

to the deepest ooze of cynicism.

O, the driveling conceit of man! Come Timon! Come Diogenes! See these silk clad coxcombs of our so-called modern world going about seeking in their vanity the distinction of uplifting those whose garments are only of cotton. Ha! Ha! What advance does our modern world show on ye? Come, Diogenes! Come with a lantern to seek out if there be in our midst a single one whose charity means a sacrifice to himself. Charity! Ha! Ha! It is the drink given from the overflowing fountain—not the last drops from the dried up well; it is the pomegranate from the tree drop-

ping the fullness of its fruit on the wayside, not the carefully hoarded grains swept from the floor of the empty granary. Charity is the giving a tithe of the surplus of the surfeited—yes—that is the today, yesterday and forever of man's boasted charity to man.

Again he laughed. How crazed with the desire to win the favor of mankind he had been! How senseless to think that he had had a message to give to the world-and that with Ward's money and inspiration he could go forth to the corners of the highways and in the midst of the market places and preach his sermons out through the dull line of type. Oh! the folly of the conceit, the hyprocrisy of our vaunted reforms. We flaunted the silk flag of patriotism while its edges were fraying over the raw backs of society's victims. Why should the world continue to bunco itself with the rot of spurious reform? What had it really ever accomplished for the world? Was the English gunner, recking in the blood soaked filth of Flemish trenches or the German submariner, choking with the poisonous fumes of his craft submerged, doing the world any more good than the lash driven slave who in the night of the world's history staggered up the pyramid ramps with his load of stone for Pharaoh's Tombs.

Oh! Why can't men be true to one another? Why can't they be just as man to man; fathers, sons, brothers-allwithout this Pharisaical fuss of society? Why-the terrible mechanics of modern governments with the martial strains of their army music today and their fields of unburied dead tomorrow? Why not let man just be man-a man to enjoy the life which God has given him, and without the dominance through society of the strong over the weak? Why hang about their necks the heavy millstone of so-called social progress? Why let those whose clutch is authority, decorate one for merit and shoot the other for desertion? Why pray for the safety of one in the death of another? Bah. . . . It was sickening—sickening—the failure of modern society's rude attempt to force happiness to one man through the misery of another. Yes. The governments of the world were confessing that Christianity itself was a failure. Why?

Because they ignored the value which Christ put upon every human life—and made man a mere pawn to be checked about through his whole life, by the accident of his place of birth.

The tide of his feeling burst through his brain like a flood from a broken dam. He put his hands to his throbbing brow and bowed low in the mockery of his emotion. He felt tired and for a long time his mind became blank, then it again took up its action but sluggishly—slow and snail like.

Well, what did it all amount to anyhow? Man was mortal. That accounted for everything, for each dying generation as it went down, gave way to another that wanted the same pleasures and the same joys, and in its folly thought that it could escape the same pains and the same penalties. As long as man's instincts and passions were the same, just so long would his naked feet bruise and break upon that forever traveled circle about the precipice of lustful desire. How then could there be any progress? That which the world called progress was really an ever heavier breaking of humanity upon the wheel of its own torture. Where shall the world then find its salvation?

He shook his head sadly and again his mind became a blank.

Suddenly from over the wall beyond him, there came the terrified cry of an affrighted child. Again and again the cry shrilled over to him—then suddenly ceased, and he knew that its mother had come, for he could hear her voice of love and comfort as she quieted the child.

The incident deflected the vagary of his mind and his thought started out in the new channel.

Yes. It was true that in the family alone was found love and wherever there was love there was progress. And then love meant sacrifice and sacrifice meant charity—the charity that would give even from grains hoarded up from the sweeping of the granary—that would give even of the last drops of water. Yes. It was there—there in the family.

But what was society trying to do to the family? What had it already done to it in America? Every day the machinery of our modern progress was loosening the ties of the

family from the safe anchorage of its dependency. Modern society was making holy matrimony a mere legal contract to be broken at the will of the parties, the State being merely interested to the point of seeing that the offspring did not become public charges. Yes. America had already established its program of founding its family institution upon the shifting sands of individual convenience.

"What a fool I have been," murmured O'Rourke, "to have ever thought that *Old Glory* could ever have awakened patriotic sentiment among our American people, in whom the fires of family love are dying down to ashes."

He wondered why the truth had never presented itself to him so sharply before. Ha, Ha. The thought came to him with a mockery that amused him. Ha, Ha. The great, big American people were so busy in their individual interferences of unnatural law-made reforms that they had entirely forgotten that the family after all was at the very foundation of a nation's power.

Then he gloomily thought of his own life. What had really been the use of it all? There were his books spread out wherever man had the intelligence to read; everywhere, translated in foreign languages, set up in long lines in the libraries, his name marked in the catalogues of the famed and one of the household words of the day. Yes, but only of the day. And what did that amount to—this mere nod of public approval for a single hour—and then the night of eternal oblivion?

Yes, his life had been a failure. And why? Why did all the laurels he had won now wither up and blow away with the gust of his resentment against the world.

He struck his hands to his breast as though in a very abomination of himself. His mind no longer worked in silence or in half suppressed phrases—but the spoken words came full and fast falling with the emphasis of a curse.

"Oh! the folly of my life. Oh! the madness of this long senseless search for public favor. Hereafter, let me rather seek joy in the bitterness of my own melancholy. Not even a wooden cup for me, but rather let me drink from the hollow of my hand, with a cave as my dwelling and a simple cloak as my single garment. Oh! how God-like it is to need nothing. If I have not the strength to withstand the rudest forces of nature, then let my grave be planted with thorns by the bitter waters of the moaning sea, and there shall I find the rest which life itself denies me."

Again the voice of the child came to him—not in a cry of distress, but in the exultation of its buoyant spirit happy in the confidence of the mother.

Yes. After all that was all there was of real happiness in life; that biological immortality that made the paternal instinct the strongest influence of the whole world. The family—the Christian family—with the cry of the helpless babe safe in its cradle by the glowing fireside. Yes., That was the great sphere of man's natural control; that was the restraining influence which molded out his life into the fullness of content.

Then he thought back on the events of the last few months, for the first time fully realizing the wonderful effect they had moved in his nature. Through all the course of adventure there came to him that dominating sway of the family institution. For example, there was Magnus. Yes. Even in his wicked heart there had at length come some of the refining ascendency of fatherly instinct. Then those Arab thieves: they had robbed that their poverty might no longer deny them the enjoyment of family. And the Duchess—and Cornelia likewise links in the God-ordained causation of family impulse, working reformation even on the dissolute mad-cap nature of Coste.

He thought of the peasant woman—whose spare form and face swollen with burning tears, came before him as she tenderly laid out the linen of her fatherless babe—of the old German father turning from the list of the killed to fondly look upon his daughter, the only surviving member of his family. . . . and then there flashed before him the clashing lines of steel in the battle by the Danube, where the brave and strong of youth had fallen—all, the beloved members of families—families that had the natural right to live

and love in an unbroken circle—but whose right was taken from them by the sinister exactions of organized society.

His thought surged back and forth like the tide breaking up against the current of a mountain freshet.

Why couldn't a man figure out some certain way of life? Why did he always have to botch it in some respect? How could he best pay for his passage through life? Was it not alone through personal influence? Yes. But personal influence what did it all mean—if anything? Where was it to be found? Why had he not found it?

For a long time he pondered.

Then suddenly it all came clear to him—like a shaft of sunshine loosened in the depths of a dungeon. He had missed it because in studying the machinery of governments he had lost sight of the overwhelming importance of the family, in bringing happiness to man. He had measured the world's population alone by individuals and not by families. He had exaggerated the worth of individual independence and underestimated the real value of family dependence in the exactions it made upon each of its members.

Merely having a wife was not having a family. His influence or all his own influence combined with that of Prima played no part in the whole scheme of the institution of the family. They were like two flakes of snow that brush for a moment together as they fall, and melt into the relentless current of eternity.

Yes. Permanent influence was still only to be found in the family; there alone was an influence of lasting purpose. The General commanded an army, but another could command it just as well as he—the author wrote a book, but another wrote one better—the artist's most inspiring effort had merely an hour of triumph—but the influence of the parent over the child ah, that was a force that rang on down through all eternity—and a force which alone the parent could fully control.

Why had he not thought it all out before? Yes. That was what he had needed, not a mere wife—but a family. And why had he not had it?

Then something like the hoarse grating of an iron bolt sounded in his mind and the sunshine of his revelation vanished and left him again in the cold reasoning of his despair. The inspiration of his discovery was gone as he confessed the cause of his despondency.

Yes, he had missed it—missed it in Athena's disillusionment. Missed it when he had not made his marriage to Prima mean more than it had ever been. Was it too late to return? Would happiness come to them? Could he right the wrong he had done her? Did she really still love him?

Then in his perplexity he found himself again standing in the grateful shade of the Temple to Nike. Athena was by his side and the breeze from Salamis blew her veil with its scent of violets against his cheek. Ah, if he could only forget her. In his fancy he looked to see if she were still standing by his side as on that wondrous day when their eyes first met in the vague but sweet understanding of their love.

Yes. He deserved the lash of the disappointment, but he would take it without flinching.

Then he cried out in his despair.

"Yes. It is in the family—in the family alone that the measure of happiness comes. But how can there be a family unless there be love. Why should I not have had the right to call Athena wife—to make her the mother of that family in which alone happiness will come to me."

And then he stood up with hands before him and with bowed head, as though to take the lash bravely as it fell.

In his thought of Athena, he had again forgotten Prima. Athena would always remain his one—his single love. He would live upon her memories. She with her beauty—her heart of gold and her spirit of fragrance—she must ever remain dead to him—but he would remain a mourner by the side of his love's sepulchre.

Then little by little his mind gathered in some thought of Prima. How wickedly he had neglected her. . . . Not even a thought as to her woman's helplessness—nor a single word to show his respect. Where was she?

The next morning, after a sleepless night, he called up her hotel.

She was gone—had been gone a week.

Where?

No indication had been given.

A new yearning shot into O'Rourke's heart; a yearning to seek her out and make amends—to prove to her the respect with which she had always inspired him. . . .

And so he searched for her, . . . and she—she searched for him.

.

If Evangeline had lived in the present rather than in the prosaic days when modern inventions have increased the importance of the smallest individuals, and when man's intercourse reaches out to them with perfect ease in their identity, there would never have been written Longfellow's beautiful story of the unrequited search of her despairing lover.

So since the reader must have already surmised that two such persons as Prima and O'Rourke—the one with her beauty and retinue of servants—the other with his international reputation and acquaintance—would not be long without finding each other, I will pass over the story of the anxious days of waiting, that you may the sooner know the tale of their final meeting and the events which it inspired.

They met when they least expected it—each one seeking the other—and yet they met in a place where if ever one should come—and just one among the thousands, that one should look to find a friend—he would be the surest of all to find him; down on a narrow strip of shore with its double row of beaches, where from the great hotel garden the palms look sleepily off toward the crimsoning dawn of morning—but not a whit earlier than those myriads of human forms who strike and plunge and bubble out the exurberance of their glad seashore life in the quickening waters.

The white sands had taken on the heat of the morning sun and the sea looked good as it lapped up on the beach, leav-

ing the mark of its moisture in a reddish width that followed back with each ebbing wave.

The sound of a motor drawn up sharply by the board walk made her turn. She looked, her brain cleared, and then it all seemed perfectly plain and natural.

A glad cry and her two hands were gathered into his.

She did not see that his face was drawn and haggard—the eyes deepened with distress and his bearing—stooping earthward.

She was too happy, in just that sublime thought which to her like a glad chorus repeated itself again and again.

"At last he has come—He is here—he is here."

XIX A WOMAN'S ADVANTAGE

If a woman has brains enough to obtain an advantage over a man—she always has the brains to keep it.

As Prima reveled day after day in the companionship of O'Rourke—the less she thought of undoing the wrong. She sought to justify her conduct in the excuse which has been more pleaded in court, more condoned by society and more approved by man, than any other exculpation in the whole realm of mortal defense of human conduct—a woman's love for man.

Even when she looked upon O'Rourke with his hollow eyes and his wrecked physique, she tried to hold down her secret by declaring:

"I will myself make him well. Again I shall make him love me and it will be best for him in the end."

But time wore along and still O'Rourke did not mend even in the fresh morning blows, that came over from the sea to him in his open air life among the flowers and the palms. And Prima herself commenced to feel a new ailment—something down deep in a place she had never before felt in her whole life—some newly found abode in her beautiful body where consciousness, up to that time unemployed, had found at last a lurking place and from which it came out at all hours of the day and night like the strange fantastic beast of a nightmare to prey upon the serenity of her soul.

She felt like a little plant of the forest gathered into a florist's shop, which every time the rain pelted on the pavement without, drooped all the more by reason of the disappointment of its being.

Yes, the canker of ill doing was eating away her very soul—and Prima knew herself too well not to realize that the cause of her misery was now becoming not so much the disappointment of her love, but rather the thought that she was wrecking the man she loved—driving him upon the rocks—every wave of her emotion pounding harder and harder against him—until finally, . . . Ah, she did not dare think

And as this change was taking place within her spirit—so also her mirror showed that her beautiful form, which had excited the admiration of the multitude, was wearing its beauty raw, against the confinement of her own wicked subterfuge. . . . Ah, supposing that she would be able to again win him,—would she not have destroyed herself in the triumph?

O'Rourke day by day appeared more pathetic, and now as he looked at her—long and steadfastly with the weak, faint smile of fortitude still hovering upon his lips,—his eyes—his every feature to her seemed to take on the expression of a Saint erucified.

Crucified and why? By whom? For what purpose? And her soul cried out within her, time and again: Tell him, think of his suffering and the suffering of that other—that other victim of your jealous hate. . . .

But she felt that she did not have the strength. She tried to devise some easier means to let him know. . . . Was there any way that she could mail the missive to him—with that braid—that braid—his—her decoration, that bit of silk that meant so much to them and the happiness of their whole

lives? Supposing that she should leave it in her bag and let him find it? Ah— No— There was only one way—to let him know; the way of right and truth—the hard way of repentance and remorse. . . . Could she find the strength to follow it? Could she ever make the sacrifice? Would she ever be able to undergo the ordeal of a confession before the bar of his judgment and hers—the woman, that woman she hated as much as she loved him?

The thoughts—the doubts—the perplexities of each succeeding hour, wore heavier and harder upon her.

And O'Rourke's sad eyes, waking or sleeping in her fancy still looked into hers—and his head was turned as though he was listening—vainly listening to hear the happy songs of the memories past.

XX I AM THINE

That day was wondrously fair and balmy—but a cloud hung at the end of every minute of the golden morning as Prima awaited his coming.

They went out under the palms where the fragrance of the flowers kissed the breath of the sea. They sat down close by the edge of the purling water, where the wavelets broke and turned.

She commenced softly.

"There are two things in this whole world which are unchanging alone of all within it."

He looked at her, but her eyes avoided his. She gazed off toward the blue expanse, and then recited softly as though to herself, the words coming to him mingled with the refrain of the water.

"O, the sea, emblem of God's unchanging power; mountains cleave in twain, hills crumble to dust, fair plains become deserts and deserts then again bloom into gardens; the earth and all the fullness thereof change with the wear of

the ages, yes—even in the smile of a single summer or the blast of a single winter. . . . But Thou, O! Sea, in all the world of matter remainest unchanged and changeless as when first reflecting back the pristine glory of the sun, and in the realm of spirit alone, in the glory of a woman's love is found the counterpart of thy enduring quality."

She paused and breathed heavily—deep and full of the breath that came to her from over the water—giving her

strength and will to continue.

"Yes, parallel, for woman's love is only found in the sea."

"How beautiful the thought," he murmured.

"Yes—and the sea has its moods and its whims—yes and its hatred like women," her voice sank lower.

"The sea has been man's greatest peril—and also sometimes, too, has woman's love brought him danger."

He smiled, pleased with the comparison, while she slowly continued:

"When the sea is calm the sailors laugh and forgive it for the treachery of its storms. Do you not think then that man should forgive women when they repent and confess their fault?"

"Assuredly. A man, right in mind, never lived who would deny to frail woman her right to forgiveness."

She clasped his arm.

"Then prepare to forgive me."

Her breath came short; then she drew herself up and, looking out toward the sea with fixed eyes, in a measured tone commenced:

"The story is long, but I shall make it short."

Her eyes rested lovingly upon him.

"O'Rourke, I have never ceased to love you from the first moment of our meeting."

"Why then did you get the divorce?"

"Why? Because I was mad—mad with jealousy—mad with success—mad with a desire to be revenged. Do you not know that I was informed of every movement that you made—that I knew of your love for that American girl?"

He looked at her in surprise.

"Yes— and those two years that we lived apart when—success came crowding up so fast to my door that it even crowded you away—.... What does my success amount to now since it made me lose you? That, too, was the result of my madness." She looked at him helplessly and then in a low voice went on:

"I must talk fast, for my strength is not great enough for the terrible confession."

Her eyes were wild.

"I had them follow you. Every move you made came back to me—and then when I found out about your taking the contract with Ward to start the newspaper—I followed you over to America, arriving here just the day before you. . . . I thought that I could win you back—not with my great love for you, but with my money—for I am rich—yes, rich—but I would give all that I possess to be poor and happy with you, just as we started out together."

Her words moved him. . . . He put out his hand softly to calm her.

"Ah—would to God that that were all that I had done, . . . but, O'Rourke, see—was there ever guilt as great?"

She reached down into her bosom and brought forth the letter . . . and then the braid, wrapped in a bit of heavy perfumed cloth.

"And now I will seal your happiness and my own misery through life. . . . Take it and read. Go and join her but I shall always love you—love you with as many heartbeats as there are sands of the sea."

She put her hand upon him lovingly. Her eyes were brimming full, but no tears fell. Her voice came with the accent of love—of repentance, sweet-laden with the heaviness of sacrifice. . . .

"Go to her. My prayers shall be for you. God forgive me the wrong I have done you both!"

He fumbled with the wrapping—his face was blank—he had no premonition of what it contained until the perfume—the perfume that Athena loved came stronger and fuller as the cloth unfolded. . . .

His hand tightened as with an electric shock when he saw the braid. He seized it—breathed a deep breath—and then a sigh came full and heavy. He put his hand, still clutching the braid, to his head—he read the message, dazed and giddy—; then, suddenly clear-minded and steady, he looked away in silence, his thought pulsing out in gladness at the joy of the revelation.

"Yes, Athena is mine—mine for the institution of the family; mine for the mother of my children; mine to love on forever. Let the greedy world revel in the carnage of hate. Let others be the heralds who shall add their unheeded alarums, to the din of battle and strife. Let the hate of men rage on—but for me there shall be the happiness of the home—the integrity of the family, the upbuilding of that influence which if unhampered by the artificial machinery of rule, shall by the sweetness of its natural sacrifice make all men courageous and their women all virtuous. Let man begin at the bottom, not at the top, to reform society. He serves his country best who cherishes his family most."

Again he read the message, still oblivious of the presence of Prima. Then he arose and cried out joyfully, the words incoherent in the gladness of their quick utterance:

"She is coming—coming to me. Perhaps their ship may be already in."

And leaping up, he sprang off down the beach, his heart surging with joy.

She slowly turned her head. . . . Her gaze followed him—followed him as he bounded joyously away down the beach, up on the plank walk; then, with a hurried, swinging stride, that seemed to her a run, he went on where the flowers bloomed in the garden by the beach. . . .

Still he did not turn about—nor give one single look behind, . . . but hastened on with quickened step and finally disappeared in the depths of the palms that gathered their heads over the roadway.

And when he was gone—her imagination still followed him, as he sent out the message of his coming—coming to give the love that, at one time had been hers. . . .

The waves, with the flow of the tide, rolled nearer to her, . . . came almost so near that the salt of her own tears—the tears of unchanging woman's love—mingled with the brine of the unchanging sea. . . .

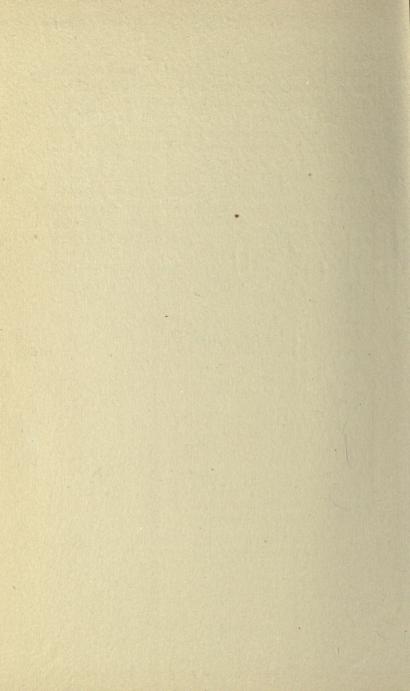
Alone, she huddled down close to the sand, as though to mitigate her misery by communion with nature.

The tears fell fast and for a time her whole form shook with the violence of her weeping.

She dried her eyes and sat still and silent.... Then a smile of courage spread over her face—for the sea seemed suddenly to her an altar upon which and under the canopy of heaven she had pledged anew her love—a love that would never change nor shrink from sacrifice—a love as lasting as the immutable form of the sea itself....

And as she looked out on the water, her smile of courage became sweet, . . . sweet with the felicity of her atonement.

THE END



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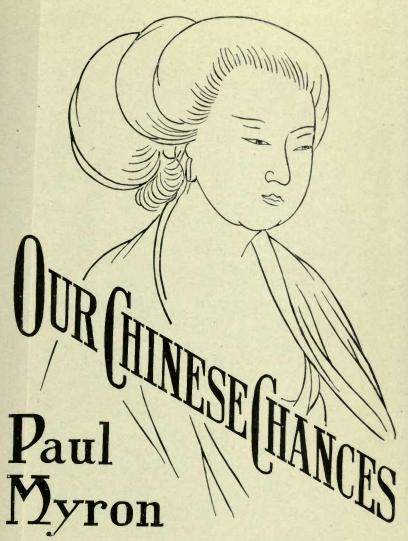
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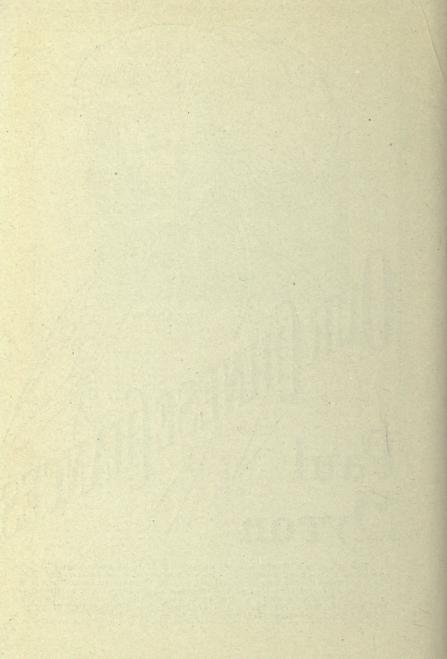
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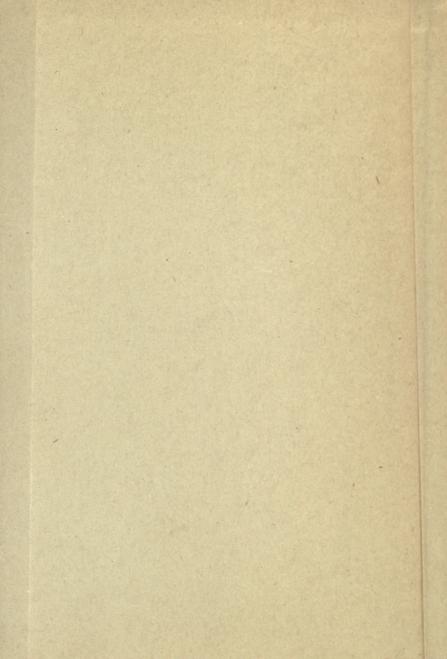
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